

THE *6829*
CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

A
COMEDY.

As it is Acted at the

Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane,

BY

His MAJESTY's Servants.

Written by Sir RICHARD STEELE. *K*

*Illud Genus Narrationes, quod in Personis positum est, debet
habere Sermonis Festivitatem, Animorum Dissimilitudinem,
Gravitatem, Lenitatem, Spem, Metum, Suspicionem, De-
siderium, Dissimulationem, Misericordiam, Rerum Vari-
etates, Fortunæ Commutationem, Insperatum Incommo-
dum, Subitam Lætiam, Jucundum Exitum Rerum.*

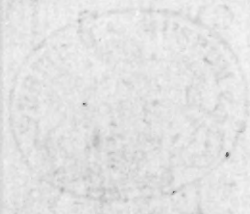
Cic. Rhetor. ad Herenn. Lib. 1.

DUBLIN:

Printed by C. TALBOT, in Parliament Street,
For W. COLLES, W. WILSON, and J. EXSHAW,
Booksellers in Dame-street, 1777.

CONSCIOUS OVERS

COMPTON



LIBRARY OF THE



T O T H E
K I N G.

May it please your Majesty,

AFTER having aspired to the highest and most laudable Ambition, that of following the Cause of Liberty, I should not have humbly petitioned your Majesty for a Direction of the Theatre, had I not believed success in that Province an Happiness much to be wished by an honest Man, and highly conducing to the Prosperity of the Common-wealth. It is in this View I lay before your Majesty a Comedy which the Audience, in Justice to themselves, has supported and encouraged, and is the Prelude of what, by your Majesty's Influence and Favour, may be attempted in future Representations.

The Imperial Mantle, the Royal Vestment, and the shining Diadem, are what strike ordinary Minds; but your Majesty's native Goodness, your Passion for Justice, and her constant Assessor Mercy, is what continually surrounds you, in the View of intelligent Spirits, and gives Hope to the Suppliant, who sees he has more than succeeded in giving your Majesty an Opportunity of doing Good. Our King is above the
Greatness

DEDICATION.

Greatness of Royalty, and every Act of his Will which makes another Man happy, has ten times more Charms in it, than one that makes himself appear rais'd above the Condition of others, but even this carries Unhappiness with it; for, calm Dominion, equal Grandeur, and familiar Greatness do not easily affect the Imagination of the Vulgar, who cannot see Power but in Terror; and as Fear moves mean Spirits, and Love prompts great Ones to obey, the Insinuations of Malecontents are directed accordingly; and the unhappy People are insnar'd, from want of Reflection, into disrespectful Ideas of their gracious and amiable Sovereign; and then only begin to apprehend the greatness of their Master, when they have incurr'd his Displeasure.

As your Majesty was invited to the Throne of a willing People, for their own Sakes, and has ever enjoyed it with Contempt of the Ostentation of it, we beseech you to protect us who revere your Title, as we love your Person. 'Tis to be a Savage to be a Rebel, and they who have fall'n from you have not so much forfeited their Allegiance, as lost their Humanity. And therefore, if it were only to preserve myself from the Imputation of being amongst the Insensible and abandon'd, I would beg Permission in the most public Manner possible, to profess myself, with the utmost Sincerity and Zeal,

S I R,

Your M A J E S T Y 's

Most Devoted Subject

and Servant,

RICHARD STEELE.

The P R E F A C E.

THIS Comedy has been receiv'd with universal Acceptance, for it was in every Part excellently perform'd; and there needs no other Applause of the Actors, but that they excelled according to the Dignity and Difficulty of the Character they represented. But this great Favour done to the Work in acting, renders the Expectation still the greater from the Author, to keep up the Spirit in the Representation of the Closet, or any other Circumstance of the Reader, whether alone or in Company: To which I can only say, that it must be remember'd a Play is to be seen, and is made to be represented with the Advantage of Action, nor can appear but with half the Spirit, without it; for the greatest Effect of a Play in reading is to excite the Reader to go see it; and when he does so, it is then a Play has the Effect of Example and Precept.

The chief Design of this was to be an innocent Performance, and the Audience have abundantly shew'd how ready they are to support what is visibly intended that way; nor do I make any Difficulty to acknowledge, that the whole was writ for the Sake of the Scene of the fourth Act, wherein Mr. Bevil evades the Quarrel with his Friend, and hope it may have some Effect upon the Goths and Vandals that frequent the Theatres, or a more polite Audience may supply their Absence.

But this Incident, and the Case of the Father and Daughter are esteemed by some People no Subject of Comedy; but I cannot be of their Mind, for any thing that has its Foundation in Happiness and Success, must be allow'd to be the Object of Comedy, and sure it must be an Improvement of it, to introduce a Joy too exquisite for Laughter, that can have no Spring but in Delight, which is the case of this young Lady. I must therefore contend that the Tears which were shed on that Occasion flow'd from Reason and good Sense, and that Men ought not to be laugh'd at for weeping, till we are come to a more clear Notion of what is to be imputed to the Hardness of the Head, and the Softness of the Heart; and I think it was very politely said of Mr. Wilks to one
A 3 who

T H E P R E F A C E.

who told him there was a General weeping for Indiana, I'll warrant he'll fight ne'er the worse for that. To be apt to give way to the Impressions of Humanity is the Excellence of a right Disposition, and the natural working of a well turn'd Spirit. But as I have suffered by Criticks who are got no farther than to enquire whether they ought to be pleas'd or not, I would willingly find them properer Matter for their Employment, and revive her a Song which was omitted for want of a Performer, and design'd for the Entertainment of Indiana; Sig. Carbonelli instead of it play'd on the Fiddle, and it is for want of a Singer that such advantageous things are said of an Instrument which were designed for a Voice. The Song is the Distress of Love-sick Maid, and may be a fit Entertainment for some small Critick, to examine whether the passion is just, or the distress Male or Female.

From Place to Place forlorn I go,
With downcast Eyes a silent Shade;
Forbidden to declare my Woe;
To speak till spoken to, afraid.

My inward Pangs, my secret Grief,
My soft consenting Looks betray:
He Loves, but gives me no Relief:
Why speaks not he who may?

It remains to say a word concerning Terence, and I am extremely surpriz'd to find what Mr. Cibber told me, prove a Truth, that what I valued myself so much upon, the Translation of him, should be imputed to me as a Reproach. Mr. Cibber's Zeal for the Work, his Care and Application in instructing the Actors, and altering the Disposition of the Scenes, when I was, thro' Sickness unable to cultivate such things myself, has been a very obliging Favour and Friendship to me. For this Reason, I was very hardly persuaded to throw away Terence's celebrated Funeral, and take only the bare Authority of the young Man's Character, and how I have worked it into an Englishman, and made Use of the same Circumstances of discovering a Daughter, when we least hop'd for one, is humbly submitted to the Learned Reader.

PROLOGUE.

P R O L O G U E,

By Mr. WELSTED.

Spoken by Mr. WILKS.

TO win your Hearts, and to secure your Praise,
The Comic-writers strive by various Ways :
By subtil Stratagems they act their Game,
And leave untry'd no Avenue to Fame.
One writes the Spouse a beating from his Wife ;
And says, each Stroke was copy'd from the Life.
Some fix all Wit and Humour in Grimace,
And make a Livelyhood of Pinkey's Face :
He e, one gay shew and costly Habits tries,
Confiding to the Judgment of your Eyes :
Another smuts his Scene (a cunning Shaver)
Sure of the Rakes and of the Wenches Favour.
Oft have these Arts prevail'd ; and one may guess,
If practis'd o'er again, would find Success,
But the bold Sage, the Poet of to-night,
By new and desperate Rules resolv'd to write ;
Fain would he give more just Appl uses Rise,
And please by Wit that scorns the Aids of Vice ;
The Praise he seeks ; from worthier Motives springs,
Such Praise, as Praise to those that gave it brings.

Your Aid, most humbly sought, then Britons lend,
And lib'ral Mirth, like lib'ral Men, defend :
No more let Ribaldry, with Licence write,
Usurp the Name of Eloquence or Wit ;
No more let lawless Farce uncensur'd go,
The lewd dull Gleanings of a Smithfield Show.
'Tis yours with Breeding to refine the Age,
To chasten Wit and moralize the Stage.

Ye Modest, Wise and Good, ye Fair, ye brave,
To night the Champion of your Virtues save,
Redeem from long Contempt the Comic Name,
And judge politely for your Country's Fame.

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

<i>Sir John Bevil.</i>	<i>Mr. Mills.</i>
<i>Mr. Sealand.</i>	<i>Mr. Williams.</i>
<i>Bevil jun. In love with Indiana.</i>	<i>Mr. Booth.</i>
<i>Myrtle, in love with Lucinda.</i>	<i>Mr. Wilks.</i>
<i>Cimberton, A Coxcomb.</i>	<i>Mr. Griffin.</i>
<i>Humphrey An old Serv. to Sir John.</i>	<i>Mr. Shephard.</i>
<i>Tom. Servant to Bevil jun.</i>	<i>Mr. Cibber.</i>
<i>Daniel, A Country Boy, Servant to Indiana.</i>	<i>Mr. Theo. Cibber.</i>

W O M E N.

<i>Mrs. Sealand, 2d Wife to Sealand.</i>	<i>Mrs. Moore.</i>
<i>Isabella, Sister to Sealand.</i>	<i>Mrs. Thurmond.</i>
<i>Indiana, Sealand's Daughter by his first Wife.</i>	<i>Mrs. Oldfield,</i>
<i>Lucinda, Sealand's Daughter by his second Wife.</i>	<i>Mrs. Booth.</i>
<i>Phillis, Maid to Lucinda.</i>	<i>Mrs. Younger.</i>

SCENE, LONDON.

THE

THE
CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *Sir John Bevil's House.*

Enter Sir John Bevil, and Humphrey.

Sir John Bevil.

HAVE you ordered that I should not be interrupted while I am dressing?

Humph. Yes, Sir, I believ'd you had something of Moment to say to me.

Sir J. Bev. Let me see, *Humphrey*: I think it is now full forty Years since I first took thee to be about myself.

Humph. I thank you, Sir, it has been an easy forty Years; and I have pass'd them without much Sickness, Care, or Labour.

Sir J. Bev. Thou hast a brave Constitution; you are a Year or two older than I am, *Sirrah*.

Humph. You have ever been of that Mind, Sir.

Sir J. Bev. You Knave, you know it; I took thee for thy Gravity and Sobriety, in my wild Years.

Humph. Ah Sir, our Manners were form'd from our different Fortunes, not our different Age, Wealth gave a Loose to your Youth, and Poverty put a Restraint upon mine.

Sir J. Bev. Well, *Humphrey*, you know I have been a kind Master to you; I have us'd you for the ingenious Nature I have observ'd in you from the beginning, more like an humble Friend than a Servant.

Humph. I humbly beg you'll be so tender of me, as to explain your Commands, Sir, without any farther Preparation.

Sir

2 **THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.**

Sir J. Bev. I'll tell thee then. In the first place, this Wedding of my Son's, in all Probability, (shut the Door) will never be at all.

Humph. How Sir! not be at all? for what Reason is it carry'd on in Appearance.

Sir J. Bev. Honest *Humphrey*, have Patience; and I'll tell thee all in order. I have myself, in some Part of my Life, lived (indeed) with Freedom, but, I hope, without Reproach: Now, I thought Liberty would be as little injurious to my son; therefore as soon as he grew towards Man, I indulg'd him in living after his own Manner: I knew not how, otherwise, to judge of his Inclination; for what can be concluded from a Behaviour under Restraint and Fear? but what charms me above all expression is, that my Son has never in the least Action, the most distant Hint or Word, valued himself upon that great Estate of his Mother's, which, according to our Marriage Settlement, he has had ever since he came to Age.

Humph. No, Sir; on the contrary he seems afraid of appearing to enjoy it, before you or any belonging to you—He is as dependent and resigned to your Will, as if he had not a Farthing but what must come from your immediate Bounty—You have ever acted like a good and generous Father, and he like an obedient and grateful Son.

Sir J. Bev. Nay his Carriage is so easy to all with whom he converses, that he is never assuming, never prefers himself to others, nor ever is guilty of that rough Sincerity which a Man is not call'd to, and certainly disoblige most of his Acquaintance; to be short, *Humphrey*, his Reputation was so fair in the World, that Old *Sea-land*, the great *India* Merchant, has offer'd his only Daughter, and sole Heiress to that vast Estate of his, as a Wife for him; you may be sure I made no Difficulties, the Match was agreed on, and this very Day named for the Wedding.

Humph. What hinders the Proceeding?

Sir J. Bev. Don't interrupt me. You know I was last *Thursday* at the Masquerade; my Son you may remember soon found us out.—He knew his Grandfather's Habit, which I then wore; and tho' it was the Mode, in the last Age, yet the Maskers, you know, followed as us if we had been the most monstrous Figures in that whole Assembly.

Humph.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 3

Humph. I remember indeed a young Man of Quality in the Habit of a Clown that was particularly troublesome.

Sir J. Bev. Right—He was too much what he seem'd to be. You remember how impertinently he follow'd, and teiz'd us, and would know who we were.

Humph. I know he has a mind to come into that Particular. [*Afide.*]

Sir J. Bev. Ay, he followed us, till the Gentleman who led the Lady in the *Indian* Mantle presented that gay Creature to the Rustick, and bid him (like *Cymon* in the Fable) grow polite, by falling in Love, and let that worthy old Gentleman alone, meaning me; The Clown was not reform'd, but rudely persisted, and offer'd to force off my Mask: with that the Gentleman throwing off his own, appear'd to be my Son, and in his Concern for me, tore off that of the Nobleman; at this they seiz'd each other; the Company call'd the Guards: and in the Surprize, the Lady swooned away: Upon which my Son quitted his Adversary, and had now no Care but of the Lady, —when raising her in his Arms, Art thou gone, cry'd he, for ever—forbid it Heav'n! She revives at his known Voice,—and with the most familiar tho' modest Gesture hangs in Safety over his Shoulder weeping, but wept as in the Arms of one before whom she could give herself a Loose, were she not under Observation: while she hides her Face in his Neck, he carefully conveys her from the Company.

Humph. I have observ'd this Accident has dwelt upon you very strongly.

Sir J. Bev. Her uncommon Air, her noble Modesty, the Dignity of her Person, and the Occasion itself drew the whole assembly together; and I soon heard it buzz'd about, she was the adopted Daughter of a famous Sea-officer, who had served in *France*. Now this unexpected and public discovery of my Son's so deep concern for her—

Humph. Was what I suppos'd alarm'd Mr. *Sealand*, in behalf of his Daughter, to break off the Match.

Sir J. Bev. You are right—He came to me Yesterday, and said, he thought himself disengaged from the Bargain, being credibly inform'd my Son was already married, or worse, to the Lady at the Masquerade. I palliated Matters, and insisted on our Agreement; but we parted with little less than a direct Breach between us. *Humph.*

Humph. Well, Sir; and what Notice have you taken of all this to my young Master?

Sir J. Bev. That's what I wanted to debate with you—I have said nothing to him yet—But look you. *Humphrey*—if there's so much in this Amour of his, that he denies my Summons to marry, I have Cause enough to be offended; and then by my insisting upon his marrying to-day, I shall know how far he is engag'd to this Lady in Masquerade, and from thence only shall be able to take my Measures: in the mean time I would have you find out how far that Rogue his Man is let into his Secret—He, I know, will play Tricks as much as to cross me, as to serve his Master.

Humph. Why do you think so of him, Sir? I believe he is no worse than I was for you, at your Son's Age.

Sir J. Bev. I see it in the Rascal's Looks. But I have dwelt on these things too long; I'll go to my Son immediately, and while I'm gone, your Part is to convince his Rogue *Tom* that I am in Earnest. I'll leave him to you.

[Exit Sir John Bevil.]

Humph. Well, tho' this Father and Son live as well together as possible, yet their Fear of giving each other Pain, is attended with constant mutual Uneasiness. I'm sure I have enough to do to be honest, and yet keep well with them both: But they know I love 'em, and that makes the Task less painful however—Oh here's the Prince of poor Coxcombs, the Representative of all the better fed than taught—Ho! ho! *Tom*, whither so gay and so airy this Morning?

Enter *Tom*, singing.

Tom. Sir, we Servants of single Gentlemen are another kind of People than you domestick ordinary Drudges that do Business: We are rais'd above you: The Pleasure of Board Wages, Tavern Dinners, and many a clear Gain; Vails, alas! you never heard or dreamt of.

Humph. Thou hast Follies and Vices enough for a Man of ten thousand a Year, tho' 'tis but as t'other Day that I sent for you to Town, to put you into Mr. *Sealand's* Family, that you might learn a little before I put you to my young Master, who is too gentle for training such a rude Thing as you were into proper Obedience--You then pull'd

pull'd off your Hat to every one you met in the Street, like a bashful great awkward cub as you were. But your great Oaken Cudgel when you were a Booby, became you much better than that dangling Stick at your Button now you are a Fop. That's fit for nothing, except it hangs there to be ready for your Master's Hand when you are impertinent.

Tom. Uncle *Humphrey*, you know my Master scorns to strike his Servants. You talk as if the World was now, just as it was when my old Master and you were in your Youth——when you went to Dinner because it was so much o'Clock, when the great Blow was given in the Hall at the Pantry-door, and all the Family came out of their Holes in such strange Dresses and formal Faces, as you see in the Pictures in our long Gallery in the Country.

Humph. Why, you wild Rogue!

Tom. You could not fall to your Dinner till a formal Fellow in a black Gown said something over the Meat, as if the Cook had not made it ready enough.

Humph. Sirrah, why do you prate after?—Despising Men of sacred Character! I hope you never heard my good young Master talk so like a Profligate?

Tom. Sir, I say you put upon me, when first I came to Town, about being orderly, and the Doctrine of wearing Shams to make Linen last clean a Fortnight, keeping my Cloaths fresh and wearing a Frock within Doors.

Humph. Sirrah, I gave you those Lessons, because I suppos'd at that time your Master and you might have din'd at home every Day, and cost you nothing; then you might have made a good Family Servant. But the Gang you have frequented since at Chocolate Houses and Taverns, in a continual Round of Noise and Extravagance—

Tom. I don't know what you heavy inmates call Noise and Extravagance; but we Gentlemen who are well fed and cut a Figure, Sir, think it a fine Life, and that we must be very pretty Fellows who are kept only to be looked at.

Humph. Very well, Sir,—I hope the Fashion of being lewd and extravagant, despising of Decency and Order, is almost at an End, since it is arrived at Persons of your Quality,

Tom. Master *Humphrey*, Ha! ha! you were an unhappy Lad to be sent up to Town in such Queer Days as you were: Why now, Sir, the Lacquies are the Men of Pleasure of the Age; the Top Gamesters; and many a lac'd Coat about the Town have had their Education in our party-colour'd Regiment—We are false Lovers; have a Taste of Musick, Poetry, Billet-Doux, Dress, Politicks, ruin Damsels, and when we are weary of thislewd Town and have a mind to take up, whip into our Master's Wigs and Linen, and marry Fortunes.

Humph. Hey day!

Tom. Nay, Sir, our Order is carried up to the highest Dignities and Distinctions; step but into the *Painted Chamber*—and by our Titles you'd take us all for Men of Quality—then again come down to the *Court of Requests*, and you see us all laying our broken Heads together for the good of the Nation: and though we never carry a Question *Nemine Contradicente*, yet this I can say with a safe Conscience, (and I wish every Gentleman of our Cloth could lay his Hand upon his Heart and say the same) that I never took so much as a single Mug of Beer for my Vote in all my Life.

Humph. Sirrah, there is no enduring your Extravagance; I'll hear you prate no longer. I wanted to see you to enquire how Things go with your Master, as far as you understand them; I suppose he knows he is to be married to-day.

Tom. Ay, Sir, he knows it, and is dress'd as gay as the Sun; but between you and I, my Dear, he has a very heavy Heart under all that Gaiety. As soon as he was dress'd I retired, but overheard him sigh in the most heavy manner. He walked thoughtfully to and fro in the Room, then went into his Closet; when he came out, he gave me this for his Mistress, whose Maid you know—

Humph. Is passionately fond of your fine Person.

Tom. The poor Fool is so tender, and loves to hear me talk of the World, and the Plays, Opera's, and *Ridotto's*, for the Winter; the Parks and *Bellfize*, for our Summer Diversions; and Lard! says she, you are so wild—but you have a World of Humour—

Humph. Coxcomb! Well, but why don't you run with your Master's Letters to Mrs. *Lucinda*, as he order'd you.

Tom.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

7

Tom. Because Mrs. *Lucinda* is not so easily come at as you think for.

Humpb. Not easily come at! Why Sirrah, are not her Father and my old Master agreed, that she and Mr. *Bewil* are to be one Flesh and Blood before to-morrow morning?

Tom. 'Tis no matter for that; her Mother, it seems, Mrs. *Sealand* has not agreed to it: and you must know, Mr. *Humbrey*, that in that Family the Gray Mare is the better Horse.

Humpb. What do'st thou mean?

Tom. In one Word, Mrs. *Sealand* pretends to have a Will of her own, and has provided a Relation of her's; a stiff, starch'd Philosopher and a wise Fool, for her Daughter; for which Reason, for these ten Days past, she has suffer'd no Message nor Letter from my Master to come near her.

Humpb. And where had you this Intelligence?

Tom. From a foolish fond Soul, that can keep nothing from me—One that will deliver this Letter too, if she is rightly manag'd.

Humpb. What! her pretty Handmaid, Mrs. *Phillis*?

Tom. Even she, Sir; this is the very Hour, you know, she usually comes hither, under a Pretence of a Visit to your Housekeeper forsooth, but in reality to have a Glance at——

Humpb. Your sweet Face, I warrant you.

Tom. Nothing else in Nature; you must know, I love to fret, and play with the little wanton.——

Humpb. Play with the little Wanton! What will this World come to!

Tom. I met her this Morning, in a new Manteau and Petticoat, not a Bit the worse for her Lady's Wearing, and she has always new Thoughts and new Airs with new Cloaths—then she never fails to steal some Glance or Gesture from every Visitant at their House; and is indeed the whole Town of Coquets at second Hand. But here she comes; in one Motion she speaks and describes herself better than all the Words in the World can.

Humpb. Then I hope, dear Sir, when your own Affair is over, you will be so good as to mind your Master's with her.

Tom. Dear *Humbrey*, you know my Master is my Friend, and those are People I never forget.——

8 The CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

Humpb. Sawciness itself! but I'll leave you to do your best for him. [Exit.]

Enter Phillis.

Phil. Oh, Mr. *Thomas*, is Mrs. *Sugar-key* at home?—Lard, one is almost ashamed to pass along the Streets. The Town is quite empty, and no body of Fashion left in it; and the ordinary People do so stare to see any thing (dress'd like a Woman of Condition) as it were on the same Floor with them pass by. Alas! alas! it is a sad thing to walk—O Fortune! Fortune!

Tom. What a sad thing to walk? Why, Madam *Phillis*, do you wish yourself lame?

Phil. No, Mr. *Tom*, but I wish I were generally carried in a Coach or Chair, and of a Fortune neither to stand nor go, but to totter, or slide, to be short-sighted, or stare, to flier in the Face, to look distant, to observe, to overlook, yet all become me; and if I was rich, I could twire and loll as well as the best of them. Oh *Tom*! *Tom*! is it not a Pity, that you should be so great a Coxcomb, and I so great a Coquet, and yet be such poor Devils as we are?

Tom. Mrs *Phillis*, I am your humble Servant for that—

Phil. Yes, Mr. *Thomas*, I know how much you are my humble Servant, and know what you said to Mrs. *Judy*, upon seeing her in one of her Lady's cast Manteaus; that any one would have thought her the Lady, and that she had order'd the other to wear it till it sat easy—for now only it was becoming—To my Lady it was only a Covering, to Mrs. *Judy* it was a Habit. This you said, after some body or other. Oh, *Tom*! *Tom*! thou art as false and as base, as the best Gentleman of them all: but, you Wretch, talk to me no more on the old odious Subject. Don't, I say.

Tom. I know not how to resist your Commands, Madam.

[In a submissive Tone, retiring.]

Phil. Commands about parting are grown mighty easy to you of late.

Tom. Oh, I have her; I have nettled and put her into the right Temper to be wrought upon, and set a prating. *[Aside]*—Why truly to be plain with you, Mrs. *Phillis*, I can take little Comfort of late in frequenting your House.

Phil.

Phil. Pray, Mr. *Thomas*, what is it all of a sudden offends your Nicety at our House?

Tom. I don't care to speak Particulars, but I dislike the Whole.

Phil. I thank you, Sir, I am a Part of that Whole.

Tom. Mistake me not, good *Phillis*.

Phil. Good *Phillis*! saucy enough. But however.—

Tom. I say, it is that thou art a Part, which gives me Pain for the Disposition of the whole. You must know, Madam, to be serious, I am a Man, at the Botom, of prodigious nice Honour. You are too much expos'd to Company at your House: To be plain, I don't like so many that would be your Mistress's Lovers, whispering to you.

Phil. Don't think to put that upon me. You say this because I wring you to the Heart, when I touch'd your guilty Conscience about *Judy*.

Tom. Ah *Phillis*! *Phillis*! if you but knew my Heart!

Phil. I know too much on't.

Tom. Nay then, poor *Crispo's* Fate and mine are one—Therefore give me Leave to say or sing, at least, as he does upon the same Occasion——

Se vedette, &c. [sings.

Phil. What do you think I am to be fobb'd off with a Song? I don't question but you have sung the same to Mrs. *Judy* too.

Tom. Don't disparage your Charms, good *Phillis*, with Jealousy of so worthless an Object; besides, she is a poor Hussy, and if you doubt the Sincerity of my Love, you will allow me true to my Interest. You are a Fortune, *Phillis*——

Phil. What would the Fop be at now? In good Time indeed, you shall be setting up for a Fortune!

Tom. Dear Mrs. *Phillis*, you have such a Spirit that we shall never be dull in Marriage, when we come together. But I tell you, you are a Fortune, and you have an Estate in my Hands. [He pulls out a purse, she eyes it.

Phil. What Pretence have I to what is in your Hands, Mr. *Tom*?

Tom. As thus: there are Hours, you know, when a Lady is neither pleas'd or displeas'd, neither sick or well, when she lolls or loiters, when she is without Desires, from having more of every thing than she knows what to do with.

10 **The CONSCIOUS LOVERS.**

Phil. Well what then ?

Tom. When she has not Life enough to keep her bright Eyes quite open, to look at her own dear image in the glass.

Phil. Explain thyself, and don't be so fond of thy own Prating.

Tom. There are also prosperous and good-natured Moments, as when a Knot or a Patch is happily fix'd ; when the Complexion flourishes.

Phil. Well, what then, I have not Patience !

Tom. Why then——or on the like Occasions——we Servants who have Skill to know how to time Business, see when such a pretty folded thing as this [*shows a Letter.*] may be presented, laid, or dropp'd, as best suits the present Humour. And Madam, because it is a long wearisome Journey to run through all the several Stages of a Lady's Temper, my Master, who is the most reasonable Man in the World, presents you this to bear your Charges on the Road. [*Gives her the Purse.*]

Phil. Now you think me a corrupt Hussey.

Tom. Oh fie, I only think you'll take the Letter.

Phil. Nay, I know you do, but I know my own Innocence ; I take it for my Mistress's Sake.

Tom. I know it, my pretty one, I know it.

Phil. Yes, I say I do it, because I would not have my Mistress deluded by one who gives no Proof of his Passion ; but I'll talk more of this, as you see me on my Way Home. No, *Tom*, I assure thee I take this Trash of thy Master's, not for the Value of the Thing, but as it convinces me, he has a true Respect for my Mistress : I remember a Verse to the Purpose.

They may be false who languish and complain,
But they who part with Money never feign. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Bevil Junior's Lodgings.

Bevil Junior Reading.

Bev. jun. These moral Writers practise Virtue after Death. This charming Vision of *Mirza* ! Such an Author consulted in a Morning, sets the Spirit for the Vicissitudes of the Day, better than the Glass does a Man's Person : but what a Day have I to go thro' ! to put on an easy Look with an aking Heart—If this Lady my Father urges me to marry should not refuse me, my Dilem-

The CONSCIOUS LOVERS. II

ma is insupportable. But why should I fear it? is not she in equal Distress with me? has not the Letter I have sent her this Morning, confess my Inclination to another? Nay, have I not moral Assurance of her Engagements too, to my Friend *Myrtle*. 'Tis impossible but she must give in to it: For sure to be deny'd is a Favour any Man may pretend to. It must be so—Well then, with the Assurance of being rejected, I think I may confidently say to my Father, I am ready to marry her—Then let me resolve upon (what I am not very good at, tho' it is) an honest Dissimulation.

Enter Tom.

Tom. Sir *John Bevil*, Sir, is in the next Room.

Bev. jun. Duncce! Why did you not bring him in?

Tom. I told him, Sir, you were in your Closet.

Bev. jun. I thought you had known, Sir, it was my Duty to see my Father any where.

[Going himself to the Door.]

Tom. The Devil's in my Master! he has always more Wit than I have. *[Aside.]*

Bevil jun. introducing Sir John.

Bev. jun. Sir, you are the most Gallant, the most Complaisant of all Parents——Sure 'tis not a Compliment to say these Lodgings are yours——Why would you not walk in, Sir?

Sir J. Bev. I was loth to interrupt you unseasonably on your Wedding-day.

Bev. jun. One to whom I am beholding for my Birth-day might have us'd less Ceremony.

Sir J. Bev. Well Son, I have Intelligence you have writ to your Mistress this Morning: It would please my Curiosity to know the Contents of a Wedding day Letter; for the courtship must then be over.

Bev. jun. I assure you, Sir, there was no Insolence in it, upon the Prospect of such a vast Fortune's being added to our Family, but much Acknowledgement of the Lady's greater Desert.

Sir J. Bev. But dear *Jack*, are you in earnest in all this: and will you really marry her?

Bev. jun. Did I ever Disobey any Commands of yours, Sir, nay, any Inclination that I saw you bent upon?

Sir

Sir J. Bev. Why, I can't say you have, Son ; but methinks in this whole Business, you have not been so warm as I could have wish'd you : You have visited her, 'tis true, but you have not been particular. Every one knows you can say and do as handsome things as any Man ; but you have done nothing, but lived in the General ; being complaisant only.

Bev. jun. As I am ever prepar'd to marry if you bid me, so I am ready to let it alone if you will have me.

[*Humphrey enters unobserved.*]

Sir J. Bev. Look you there now, why what am I to think of this so absolute and so indifferent a Resignation ?

Bev. jun. Think ! that I am still your Son, Sir,—Sir—you have been marry'd, and I have not. And you have, Sir, found the Inconvenience there is, when a Man Weds with too much Love in his Head. I have been told, Sir, that at the time you married, you made a mighty Bustle on the Occasion : There was challenging and fighting, scaling Walls—locking up the Lady—and the Gallant under an Arrest for fear of killing all his Rivals.—Now, Sir, I suppose you have found the ill Consequences of these strong Passions and Prejudices, in preference of one Woman to another, in case of a Man's becoming a Widower——

Sir J. Bev. How is this ?

Bev. jun. I say, Sir, Experience has made you wiser in your Care of me—for, Sir, since you lost my dear Mother your Time has been so heavy, so lonely and so tasteless, that you are so good as to guard me against the like Unhappiness by marrying me prudentially by way of Bargain and Sale. For, as you well judge, a Woman that is espous'd for a Fortune, is yet a better Bargain if she dies ; for then a Man still enjoys what he did marry, the Money ; and is disencumber'd of what he did not marry, the Woman.

Sir J. Bev. But pray, Sir, do you think *Lucinda* then a Woman of such little Merit ?

Bev. jun. Pardon me, Sir. I don't carry it so far neither ; I am rather afraid I shall like her too well ; she has for one of her Fortune, a great many needless and superfluous good Qualities.

Sir J. Bev. I am afraid, Son, there's something I don't see yet, something that is smother'd under all this Rallery.

Bev.

Bev. jun. Not in the least, Sir: if the Lady is dress'd and ready, you see I am. I suppose the Lawyers are ready too.

Humph. This may grow warm, if I don't interpose.

[*Aside*] Sir, Mr. *Sealand* is at the Coffee-house, and has sent to speak with you.

Sir J. Bev. Oh! that's well! then I warrant the Lawyers are ready. Son, you'll be in the Way, you say—

Bev. jun. If you please, Sir, I'll take a Chair, and go to Mr. *Sealand's* where the young Lady, and I, will wait your Leisure.

Sir J. Bev. By no means—The old Fellow will be so vain, if he sees—

Bev. jun. Ay—But the young Lady, Sir, will think me so indifferent—

Humph. Ah—There you are right—press your Readiness to go to the Bride—he won't let you. [*Aside to Bev. jun.*

Bev. jun. Are you sure of that? [*Aside to Humph.*

Humph. How he likes being prevented. [*Aside.*

Sir J. Bev. No, no: You are an Hour or two too early.

[*Looking on his Watch.*

Bev. jun. You'll allow me, Sir, to think it too late to visit a beautiful, virtuous young Woman, in the Prime and Bloom of Life, ready to give herself to my Arms: and to place her Happiness or Misery for the future, in being agreeable or displeasing to me, is a—Call a Chair.

Sir J. Bev. No, no, no, dear *Jack*; this *Sealand* is a moody old Fellow: There's no dealing with some People, but by managing with Indifference. We must leave to him the Conduct of this Day. It is the last of his commanding his Daughter.

Bev. jun. Sir, he can't take it ill, that I am impatient to be hers.

Sir J. Bev. Pray, let me govern in this Matter: you can't tell how humourfome old Fellows are:—There's no offering Reason to some of 'em, especially when they are rich—If my Son should see him, before I have brought old *Sealand* into better Temper, the Match would be impracticable. [*Aside.*]

Humph. Pray, Sir, let me beg you to let Mr. *Bevil* go—See, whether he will or not. [*Aside to Sir John*]

[*Then to Bev.*] Pray, Sir, command yourself; since you see my Master's positive, it is better you should not go.

Bev.

14 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

Bev. jun. My Father Commands me, as to the Object of my Affections; but I hope he will not, as to the Warmth and Height of them.

Sir J. Bev. So! I must even leave things as I found them: And in the mean time, at least, keep old *Sealand* out of his sight—Well, Son, I'll go myself and take Orders in your Affair—You'll be in the Way, I suppose, if I send to you—I'll leave your old Friend with you—*Humphrey*—don't let him stir, d'ye hear: your Servant, your Servant.

[Exit Sir John.]

Humph. I have had a sad time on't, Sir, between you and my Matter—I see you are unwilling, and I know his violent Inclination for the Match—I must betray neither, and yet deceive you both, for your common Good—Heav'n grant a good End of this Matter: but there is a Lady, Sir, that gives your Father much Trouble and Sorrow—You'll pardon me.

Bev. jun. Humphrey, I know thou art a Friend to both: and in that Confidence, I dare tell thee—That Lady—is a Woman of Honour and Virtue. You may assure yourself I will never marry without my Father's Consent: But give me leave to say too, this Declaration does not come up to a Promise, that I will take whomsoever he pleases.

Humph. Come, Sir, I wholly understand you: You would engage my Services to free you from this Woman whom my Master intends you to make away in time, for the Woman you have really a Mind to.

Bev. jun. Honest *Humphrey*, you have always been an useful Friend to my Father, and myself; I beg you continue your good Offices, and don't let us come to the Necessity of a Dispute; for if we should dispute, I must either part with more than Life, or lose the best of Fathers.

Humph. My dear Master, were I but worthy to know this Secret, that so nearly concerns you, my Life, my All, should be engag'd to serve you. This, Sir, I dare promise, that I am sure I will and can be secret; your Trust, at worst, but leaves you where you were; and if I cannot serve you, I will at once be plain, and tell you so.

Bev. jun. That's all I ask: Thou hast made it now my Interest to trust thee—Be patient then, and hear the Story of my Heart.

Humph. I am all Attention, Sir.

Bev.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 15

Bew. jun. You may remember, *Humphrey*, that in my last Travels, my Father grew uneasy at my making so long a Stay at *Toulon*.

Humph. I remember it; he was apprehensive some Woman laid hold of you.

Bew. jun. His Fears were just; for there I first saw this Lady: She is of *English* Birth: Her Father's Name was *Danvers*, a younger Brother of an ancient Family, and originally an eminent Merchant of *Bristol*; who upon repeated Misfortunes, was reduced to go privately to the *Indies*. In this Retreat Providence again grew favourable to his Industry, and in six Year's time restor'd him to his former Fortunes. On this he sent Directions over that his Wife and little Family should follow him to the *Indies*. His Wife impatient to obey such welcome Orders, would not wait the Leisure of a Convoy, but took the first occasion of a single Ship, and with her Husband's Sister only, and this Daughter, then scarce seven Years old, undertook the fatal Voyage; For here, poor Creature, she lost her Liberty and Life; she and her Family, with all they had, were unfortunately taken by a Privateer from *Toulon*. Being thus made a Prisoner, tho' as such not ill treated, yet, the Fright, the Shock, and cruel Disappointment, seized, with such Violence upon her unhealthy Frame, she sickn'd, pined, and died at Sea.

Humph. Poor Soul! O the helpless Infant!

Bew. jun. Her Sister yet surviv'd, and had the care of her: The Captain too prov'd to have Humanity, and became a Father to her; for having himself marry'd an *English* Woman, and being Childless, he brought home into *Toulon* this her, little Country-woman; presenting her, with all her dead Mother's Moveables of Value, to his Wife to be educated as his own adopted Daughter.

Humph. Fortune here seem'd again to smile on her.

Bew. jun. Only to make her Frowns more terrible: For in his Height of Fortune, this Captain too her Benefactor unfortunately was kill'd at Sea, and dying intestate, his Estate fell wholly to an Advocate his Brother, who coming soon to take Possession, there found (among his other Riches) this blooming Virgin, at his Mercy.

Humph. He durst not sure abuse his Power.

Bew. jun. No Wonder if his pamper'd Blood was fir'd
at

16 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

at the Sight of her—in short, he lov'd, but when all Arts and gentle means had fail'd to move, he offer'd too his Menaces in vain, denouncing Vengeance on her Cruelty; demanding her to account for all her Maintenance, from her Childhood: seiz'd on her little Fortune, as his own Inheritance, and was dragging her by Violence to Prison; when Providence at the Instant interpos'd, and sent me by Miracle to relieve her.

Humph. 'Twas Providence indeed; but pray, Sir, after all this trouble, how came this Lady at last to *England*?

Bew. jun. The disappointed Advocate finding she had so unexpected a Support, on cooler Thoughts, descended to a Composition; which I, without her Knowledge, secretly discharged.

Humph. That generous Concealment made the Obligation double.

Bew. jun. Having thus obtain'd her Liberty, I prevail'd not without some Difficulty, to see her safe to *England*, where no sooner arrived, but my Father, jealous of my being imprudently engag'd, immediately propos'd this other fatal Match that hangs upon my Quiet.

Humph. I find, Sir, you are irrecoverably fix'd upon this Lady.

Bew. jun. As my vital Life dwells in my Heart,—and yet you see—what I do to please my Father: walk in this Pageantry of Dress, this splendid Covering of Sorrow—But, *Humphrey*, you have your Lesson.

Humph. Now, Sir, I have but one material Question.--

Bew. jun. Ask it freely.

Humph. Is it then, your own Passion for this secret Lady, or hers for you, that gives you this Aversion to the Match your Father has propos'd you?

Bew. jun. I shall appear, *Humphrey*, more Romantick in my Answer than in all the rest of my Story: For tho' I doat on her to Death, and have no little Reason to believe she has the same Thoughts for me; yet in all my Acquaintance, and utmost Privacies with her, I never once directly told her, that I lov'd her.

Humph. How was it possible to avoid it?

Bew. jun. My tender Obligations to my Father have laid so inviolable a Restraint upon my Conduct, that till I have his Consent to speak, I am determin'd, on that Subject, to be dumb for ever.—

Humph.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 17

Humph. Well Sir, to your Praise be it spoken, you are certainly the most unfashionable Lover in *Great-Britain*.

Enter Tom.

Tom. Sir, Mr. *Myrtle*'s at the next Door, and if you're at Leisure, will be glad to wait on you.

Bev. jun. Whenever he pleases—hold *Tom!* did you receive no Answer to my Letter?

Tom. Sir, I was desired to call again; for I was told, her Mother would not let her be out of her Sight; but about an Hour hence, Mrs. *Lettice* said, I should certainly have one.

Bev. jun. Very Well.

Humph. Sir I will take another Opportunity: In the mean Time, I only think it proper to tell you, that from a Secret I know, you may appear to your Father as forward as you please, to marry *Lucinda*, without the least Hazard of its coming to a Conclusion——Sir, your most obedient Servant.

Bev. jun. Honest *Humphrey*, continue but my Friend, in this Exigence, and you shall always find me yours.

[*Exit Humph.*

I long to hear how my Letter has succeeded with *Lucinda*—but I think it cannot fail: for at worst, were it possible she could take it ill, her Resentment of my Indifference may as probably occasion a Delay, as her taking it right——Poor *Myrtle*, what Terrors must he be in all this while?—Since he knows she is offer'd to me, and refused to him, there is no conversing, or taking any Measures with him, for his own Service——But I ought to bear with my friend, and use him as one in Adversity.

All his Disquiets by my own I prove,

The greatest Grief's Perplexity in Love. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE *Continues.*

Enter Bevil jun. and Tom.

Tom. SIR, Mr. *Myrtle*.

Bev. jun. Very well—do you step again, and wait for an answer to my Letter.

C

Enter

Enter Myrtle.

Well *Charles*, why so much care in thy Countenance? Is there any thing in the World deserves it? You, who used to be so gay, so open, so vacant!

Myrt. I think we have of late chang'd Complexions. You, who us'd to be much the graver Man, are now all Air in your Behaviour—But the Cause of my Concern, may, for ought I know be the same Object that gives you all this Satisfaction. In a Word, I am told that you are this very Day (and your Dress confirms me in it) to be married to *Lucinda*.

Bev. jun. You are not misinformed.—Nay, put not on the Terrors of a Rival, till you hear me out. I shall disoblige the best of Fathers, if I don't seem ready to marry *Lucinda*: And you know I have ever told you, you might make use of my secret Resolution never to marry her, for your own Service, as you please. But I am now driven to the Extremity of immediately refusing or complying, unless you help me to escape the Match.

Myrt. Escape? Sir, neither her Merit nor her Fortune are below your acceptance—Escaping do you call it!

Bev. jun. Dear Sir, do you wish I should desire the Match.

Myrt. No—but such is my humourous and sickly state of Mind, since it has been able to relish nothing but *Lucinda*, that tho' I must owe my Happiness to your Aversion to this Marriage, I can't bear to hear her spoken of with Levity or Unconcern.

Bev. jun. Pardon me, Sir: I shall transgress that way no more. She has Understanding, Beauty, Shape, Complexion, Wit.———

Myrt. Nay, dear *Bevil*, don't speak of her as if you lov'd her neither.

Bev. jun. Why then to give you Ease at once, tho' I allow *Lucinda* to have good Sense, Wit, Beauty and Virtue, I know another in whom these Qualities appear to me more amiable than in her.

Myrt. There you spoke like a reasonable and good-natur'd Friend. When you acknowledged her Merit, and own your Prepossession for another, at once you gratify my Fondness, and cure my Jealousy.

Bev. jun. But all this while you take no Notice, you have

have no Apprehension of another Man, that has twice the Fortune of either of us.

Myrt. *Cimberton*! hang him, a formal, philosophical, pedantick Coxcomb—For the Sor, with all these crude Notions of divers things, under the Direction of great Vanity, and very little Judgment, shews the strongest Bias is Avarice; which is so predominant in him that he will examine the Limbs of his Mistress with the Caution of a Jockey, and pays no more Compliment to her personal Charms, than if she were a meer breeding Animal.

Bew. jun. Are you sure that is not affected? I have known some Women sooner set on fire by that sort of Negligence, than by——

Myrt. No, no; hang him, the Rogue has no Art, it is pure simple Insolence and Stupidity.

Bew. jun. Yet with all this, I don't take him for a Fool.

Myrt. I own the Man is not a Natural; he has a very quick sense, tho' very slow Understanding—he says indeed many things, that want only the Circumstances of Time and Place to be very just and agreeable.

Bew. jun. Well, you may be sure of me, if you can disappoint him; but my Intelligence says, the Mother has actually sent for the Conveyancer, to draw Articles for his Marriage with *Lucinda*; tho' those for mine with her, are, by her Father's Order, ready for signing: but it seems she has not thought fit to consult either him or his Daughter in the Matter.

Myrt. Pshaw! A poor troublesome Woman—Neither *Lucinda* nor her Father will ever be brought to comply with it,—besides I am sure *Cimberton* can make no settlement upon her, without the Concurrence of his great Uncle, Sir *Geoffry* in the West.

Bew. jun. Well Sir, and can I tell you that's the very Point that is now laid before her Council; to know whether a firm Settlement can be made, without his Uncle's actually joining in it—Now pray consider, Sir, when my Affair with *Lucinda* comes, as it soon must, to an open Rupture, how are you sure that *Cimberton's* Fortune may not then tempt her Father too, to hear his Proposals?

Myrt. There you are right indeed, that must be provided against—Do you know who are her Council?

Bev. jun. Yes, for your Service I have found out that too, they are Serjeant *Bramble* and old *Target*—by the way, they are neither of 'em known in the Family; now I was thinking why you might not put a couple of false Council upon her, to delay and confound matters a little—besides, it may probably let you into the bottom of her whole Design against you.

Myrt. As how pray?

Bev. jun. Why can't you slip on a black wig, and a Gown, and be old *Bramble* yourself?

Myrt. Ha? I don't dislike it—but what shall I do for a Brother in the Case?

Bev. jun. What think you of my Fellow *Tom*? the Rogue's intelligent, and is a good Mimick; all his Part will be but to stutter heartily, for that's Old *Target*'s Case—Nay, it would be an immoral thing to mock him, were it not that his Impertinence is the Occasion of it's breaking out to that Degree—the Conduct of the Scene will chiefly lie upon you.

Myrt. I like it of all things: if you'll send *Tom* to my Chambers I will give him full Instructions: This will certainly give me Occasion to raise Difficulties, to puzzle or confound her Projects for a while, at least,

Bev. jun. I'll warrant you Success: so far we are right then: And now, *Charles*, your Apprehension of my marrying her is all you have to get over.

Myrt. Dear *Bevil*! tho' I know you are my Friend, yet when I abstract myself from my own Interest in the Thing, I know no Objection she can make to you, or you to her, and therefore hope——

Bev. jun. Dear *Myrtle*, I am as much obliged to you for the Cause of your Suspicion, as I am offended at the Effect: but be assured, I am taking Measures for your certain Security, and all things with regard to me will end in your entire Satisfaction.

Myrt. Well, I'll promise you to be as easy and as confident as I can; tho' I cannot but remember that I have more than Life at stake on your Fidelity. [Going]

Bev. jun. Then depend upon it, you have no Chance against you.

Myrt. Nay, no Ceremony, you know I must be going. [Exit *Myrt.*

Bev.

Bev. jun. Well! this is another Instance of the Perplexities which arise too, in faithful Friendship: We must often, in this Life, go on in our good Offices, even under the Displeasure of those to whom we do them, in Compassion to their Weaknesses and Mistakes—But all this while, poor *Indiana* is tortured with the Doubt of me! she has no Support or Comfort but in my Fidelity, yet sees me daily press'd in marriage with another! How painful, in such a Crisis, must be every Hour she thinks on me? I'll let her see, at least, my conduct to her is not changed: I'll take this Opportunity to visit her; for tho' the religious Vow I have made to my Father, restrains me from ever marrying, without his Approbation, yet that confines me not from seeing a virtuous Woman, that is the pure Delight of my Eyes, and the guiltless Joy of my Heart: But the best Condition of human Life is but a gentler Misery.

To hope for perfect Happiness is vain,

And Love has ever its allays of Pain.

[*Exit.*

Enter Isabella, and Indiana in her own Lodgings.

Isab. Yes—I say 'tis Artifice, dear Child; I say to thee again and again, 'tis Skill and Management.

Ind. Will you persuade me there can be an ill Design in supporting me in the Condition of a Woman of Quality? attended, dress'd, and lodg'd like one; in my Appearance abroad, and my Furniture at home, every way in the most sumptuous Manner, and he that does it has Artifice, a Design in it?

Isab. Yes, yes.

Ind. And all this without so much as explaining to me that all about me comes from him!

Isab. Ay, ay—the more for that—that keeps the Title to all you have, the more in him.

Ind. The more in him! He scorns the Thought—

Isab. Then he—he—he—

Ind. Well, be not so eager—If he is an ill Man, let us look into his Stratagems. Here is another of them. [*Shewing a Letter.*] Here's two hundred and fifty Pound in Bank Notes, with these Words, 'To pay for the Set of 'dressing-plate, which will be brought home to-morrow,' Why, dear Aunt, now here's another Piece of Skill for you, which I own I cannot comprehend—and it is with a

bleeding Heart I hear you say any thing to the Disadvantage of Mr. *Bewil*. When he is present, I look upon him as one to whom I owe my Life, and the Support of it; Then again as the Man who loves me with Sincerity and Honour. When his Eyes are cast another way, and I dare survey him, my Heart is painfully divided between Shame and Love—Oh! cou'd I tell you:—

Isab. Ah! you need not: I imagine all this for you.

Ind. This is my State of Mind in his presence; and when he is absent, you are ever dinning my Ears with Notions of the Arts of Men; that his hidden Bounty, his respectful Conduct, his careful Provision for me, after his Preserving me from utmost Misery, are certain Signs he means nothing, but to make I know not what of me?

Isab. Oh! you have a sweet Opinion of him, truly.

Ind. I have, when I am with him, ten thousand Things besides my Sex's natural Decency and Shame, to suppress my Heart that yearns to thank, to praise, to say it loves him: I say thus it is with me while I see him; and in his Absence, I am entertain'd with nothing but your Endeavours to tear this amiable Image from my Heart, and in its stead, to place a base Dissembler, an artful Invader of my Happiness, my Innocence, my Honour.

Isab. Ah poor Soul! has not his Plot taken? don't you die for him? has not the way he has taken, been the most proper with you? Oh! oh! he has Sense, and has judg'd the thing right.

Ind. Go on then, since nothing can answer you: say what you will of him. Heigh! ho!

Isab. Heigh! ho! indeed. It is better to say so, as you are now than as many others are. There are among the Destroyers of Women, the Gentle, the Generous, the Mild, the affable, the Humble, who all soon after their Success in their Designs, turn to the contrary of those Characters. I will own to you, Mr. *Bewil* carries his Hypocrisy the best of any Man living, but still he is a Man, and therefore a Hypocrite. They have usurped an Exemption from Shame for any Baseness, any Cruelty towards us. They embrace without Love; they make Vows without Conscience of Obligation; they are Partners, nay, Seducers to the Crime, wherein they pretend to be less guilty.

Ind.

Ind. That's truly observed. [Aside
But what's all this to *Bewil*?

Ifab. This it is to *Bewil*, and all Mankind. Trust not those, who will think the worse of you for your Confidence in them. Serpents, who lie in wait for Doves. Won't you be on your Guard against those who would betray you? Won't you doubt those who would condemn you for believing 'em? Take it from me, Fair and natural Dealing is to invite Injuries, 'tis bleating to escape Wolves who would devour you! Such is the World,—and such (since the Behaviour of one Man to myself) have I believed all the rest of the Sex. [Aside.

Ind. I will not doubt the Truth of *Bewil*, I will not doubt it; he has not spoke it by an Organ that is given to lying; his Eyes are all that ever told me that he was mine, I know his Virtue, I know his filial Piety, and ought to trust his Management with a Father, to whom he has uncommon Obligations. What have I to be concern'd for! my Lesson is very short. If he takes me for ever, my Purpose of Life is only to please him. If he leaves me (which Heaven avert) I know he'll do it nobly, and I shall have nothing to do, but to learn to die, after worse than Death has happened to me.

Ifab. Ay, do, persist in your Credulity! flatter yourself that a man of his figure and Fortune will make himself the Jest of the town, and marry a handsome Beggar for Love.

Ind. The Town! I must tell you, Madam, the Fools that laugh at Mr. *Bewil*, will but make themselves more ridiculous; his Actions are the result of thinking, and he has Sense enough to make even Virtue fashionable.

Ifab. O' my Conscience he has turn'd her Head—Come, come, if he were the honest Fool you take him for, why has he kept you here this three Weeks, without sending you to *Bristol*, in search of your Father, your Family, and your Relations?

Ind. I am convinc'd he still designs it; and that nothing keeps him here but the Necessity of not coming to a Breach with his Father, in regard to the Match he has propos'd him! Besides has he not writ to *Bristol*? and has not he Advice that my Father has not been heard of there almost these twenty Years?

Ifab. All Sham, meer Evasion; he is afraid, if he should carry

24 The CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

carry you thither, your honest Relations may take you out of his hands and so blow up all his wicked hopes at once.

Ind. Wicked Hopes! did I ever give him any such?

Ifab. Has he ever given you any honest ones? can you say, in your Conscience, he ever once offer'd to marry you?

Ind. No! but by his Behaviour I am convinc'd he will offer it the Moment 'tis in his Power, or consistent with his Honour, to make such a Promise good to me,

Ifab. His Honour!

Ind. I will rely upon it: therefore desire you will not make my Life uneasy, by these ungrateful Jealousies of one to whom I am, and wish to be obliged: For from his Integrity alone, I have resolv'd to hope for Happiness.

Ifab. Nay I have done my Duty; if you won't see, at your Peril be it—

Ind. Let it be—This is his Hour of visiting me.

Ifab. Oh! to be sure, keep up your Form; don't see him in a Bed-chamber: This is pure Prudence, when she is liable, wherever he meets her, to be convey'd where e'er he pleases. [*Apart.*

Ind. All the rest of my Life is but waiting till he comes: I live only when I'm with him. [*Exit.*

Ifab. Well go thy Ways, thou wilful Innocent! I once had almost as much Love for a Man, who poorly left me, to marry an Estate—And I am now, against my Will what they call an old Maid—but I will not let the Peevishness of that Condition grow upon me—only keep up the Suspicion of it, to prevent this Creature's being any other than a Virgin, except upon proper Terms

Re-enter Indiana speaking to a Servant.

Ind. Desire Mr. Bevil to walk in—Design! impossible! A base designing Mind could never think of what he hourly puts in Practice—And yet since the late Rumour of his Marriage, he seems more reserved than formerly—he sends in too, before he sees me, to know if I am at leisure—such new Respect may cover Coldness in the Heart—it certainly makes me thoughtful—I'll know the worst at once: I'll lay such fair Occasions in his way, that it shall be impossible to avoid an Explanation—for these Doubts are insupportable!——But see! he comes, and clears them all.

Enter

Enter Bevil junior.

Bev. jun. Madam, your most obedient—I am afraid I broke in upon your Rest last Night—'twas very late before we parted I but 'twas your own Fault: I never saw you in such agreeable Humour.

Ind. I am extremely glad we were both pleas'd; for I thought I never saw you better Company.

Bev. jun. Me Madam! you rally; I said very little.

Ind. But I am afraid you heard me say a great deal; and when a Woman is in the talking Vein, the most agreeable thing a man can do, you know, is to have Patience to hear her.

Bev. Then 'tis Pity, Madam, you should ever be silent that we might be always agreeable to one another.

Ind. If I had your Talent or Power to make my Actions speak for me, I might indeed be silent, and yet pretend to nothing more than the agreeable.

Bev. jun. If I might be vain of any thing, in my Power Madam, 'tis that my Understanding, from all your Sex, has mark'd you out as the most deserving Object of my Esteem.

Ind. Should I think I deserve this, 'twere enough to make my Vanity forfeit the very Esteem you offer me.

Bev. jun. How so, Madam?

Ind. Because Esteem is the result of Reason, and to deserve it from good Sense, the Height of human Glory: Nay, I had rather a Man of Honour should pay me that than all the Homage of a sincere and humble Love.

Bev. jun. You certainly distinguish right, Madam; Love often kindles from external Merit only.—

Ind. But Esteem rises from a higher Source, the Merit of the Soul.—

Bev. jun. True—And great Souls only can deserve it.

[Bowling respectfully.]

Ind. Now, I think they are greater still, that can so charitably part with it.

Bev. jun. Now, Madam, you make me vain, since the utmost Pride and Pleasure of my Life is, that I esteem you—as I ought.

Ind. *[Aside.]* As he ought! still more perplexing! he neither saves nor kills my Hope.

Bev. jun. But, Madam, we grow grave methinks—Let's find

find some other Subject—Pray how did you like the Opera last Night ?

Ind. First give me Leave to thank you for my Tickets.

Bew. jun. O! your Servant Madam—But pray tell me, you now who are never partial to the Fashion, I fancy, must be the properest Judge of a mighty Dispute among the Ladies, that is, whether *Crispo* or *Grifelda*, is the more agreeable Entertainment.

Ind. With Submission now, I cannot be a proper Judge of this Question.

Bew. jun. How so, Madam?

Ind. Because I find I have a Partiality for one of them.

Bew. jun. Pray which is that?

Ind. I do not know—there's something in that Rural Cottage of *Grifelda*, her forlorn Condition, her Poverty, her Solitude, her Resignation, her innocent Slumbers, and that lulling *Dolce Sogno* that's sung over her; it had an Effect upon me, that—in short I never was so well deceiv'd at any of them.

Bew. jun. Oh! Now then, I can account for the Dispute; *Grifelda*, it seems, is the Distress of an injur'd innocent Woman; *Crispo*, that only of a Man in the same Condition; therefore the Men are mostly concern'd for *Crispo*, and by a natural Indulgence, both Sexes for *Grifelda*.

Ind. So that Judgment you think, ought to be for one; tho' Fancy and Complaisance have got ground for the other. Well! I believe you will never give me Leave to dispute with you on any Subject; for I own *Crispo* has its Charms for me too: Though in the main, all the pleasure the best Opera gives us, is but meer Sensation—Me thinks it's pity the Mind can't have a little more Share in the Entertainment—The Musick's certainly fine; but in my Thoughts, there's none of your Composers come up to old *Shakespear* and *Orway*.

Bew. jun. How Madam! why if a Woman of your Sense were to say this in the Drawing-room—

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, here's Signior *Carbonelli* says he waits your Commands in the next Room.

Bew. jun. A propos! You were saying Yesterday Madam, you had a mind to hear him—will you give him leave to entertain you now.

Ind.

Ind. By all means, desire the Gentleman to walk in.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Bev. jun. I fancy you will find something in this Hand that is uncommon.

Ind. You are always finding ways, Mr. *Bevil*, to make Life seem less tedious to me—

Enter Musick-Master.

When the Gentleman pleases.

After a Sonata is play'd, Bevil waits on the Master to the Door, &c.

Bev. jun. You smile, Madam, to see me so complaisant to one whom I pay for his Visit: Now, I own, I think it is not enough barely to pay those, whose Talents are superior to our own (I mean such Talents as would become our Condition, if we had them.) Methinks we ought to do something more, than barely gratify them, for what they do at our Command, only because their Fortune is below us.

Ind. You say I smile: I assure you it was a Smile of Approbation; for indeed I can't but think it the distinguishing part of a Gentleman, to make his superiority of Fortune as easy to his Inferiors, as he can—Now once more to try him, [*Aside*—I was saying just now, I believed you would never let me dispute with you, and I dare say, it will always be so; However, I must have your Opinion upon a Subject, which created a Debate between my Aunt and me, just before you came hither: she would needs have it, that no Man ever does any extraordinary Kindness or Service for a Woman, but for his own sake.

Bev. jun. Well, Madam! Indeed I can't but be of her Mind.

Ind. What tho' he should maintain, and support her, without demanding any thing of her, on her part?

Bev. jun. Why, Madam, is making an Expence in the Service of a valuable Woman, (for such I must suppose her) though she should never do him any Favour, nay, though she should never know who did her such Service, such a mighty Heroic Business?

Ind. Certainly! I should think he must be a Man of an uncommon Mold.

Bev. jun. Dear Madam, why so; 'tis but at best, a better Taste in Expence: To bestow upon one, whom he may
Think

think one of the Ornaments of the whole Creation, to be conscious, that from his Superfluity, an innocent, a virtuous Spirit is supported above the Temptations and Sorrows of Life! That he sees Satisfaction, Health and Gladness in her Countenance, while he enjoys the Happiness of seeing her (as that I will suppose too, or he must be too abstracted, too insensible) I say, if he is allow'd to delight in that Prospect; alas! what mighty matter is there, in all this?

Ind. No mighty matter, in so disinterested a Friendship!

Bev. jun. Disinterested! I can't think him so: your Hero, Madam, is no more, than what every Gentleman ought to be; and I believe very many are—He is only one, who takes more Delight in Reflections, than in Sensations; He is more pleas'd with thinking than eating; that's the utmost you can say of him—Why, Madam, a greater Expence, than all this, Men lay out upon an unnecessary Stable of Horses.

Ind. Can you be sincere in what you say?

Bev. jun. You may depend upon it, if you know any such Man, he does not love Dogs inordinately.

Ind. No, that he does not.

Bev. jun. Nor Cards, nor Dice.

Ind. No.

Bev. jun. Nor Bottle Companions.

Ind. No.

Bev. jun. Nor loose Women.

Ind. No, I'm sure he does not.

Bev. jun. Take my Word then, if your admir'd Hero is not liable to any kind of these Demands, there's no such Pre-eminence in this, as you imagine: Nay, this way of Expence you speak of, is what exalts and raises him, that has a Taste for it: And, at the same time, his Delight is incapable of Satiety, Disgust, or Penitence.

Ind. But still I insist his having no private Interest in the Action, makes it prodigious, almost incredible.

Bev. jun. Dear Madam, I never knew you more mistaken: Why, who can be more a Usurer, than he, who lays out his Money in such valuable Purchases? If Pleasure be worth purchasing, how great a Pleasure is it to him, who has a true Taste of Life, to ease an aching Heart, to see the human Countenance lighted up, into Smiles of Joy, on the receipt of a Bit of Ore, which is superfluous
and

and otherwise useless in a Man's own Pocket? What could a Man do better with his Cash? This is the Effect of an human Disposition, where there is only a general Type of Nature, and common Necessity. What then must it be when we serve an Object of Merit, of Admiration!

Ind. Well! The more you argue against it, the more I shall admire the Generosity.

Bév. jun. Nay, nay—Then, Madam, 'tis time to fly after a Declaration, that my Opinion strengthens my Adversary's Argument—I had best hasten to my Appointment with Mr. *Myrtle*, and begone, while we are Friends, and—before things are brought to an Extremity—

Exit carelessly.

Enter Isabella.

Ifab. Well, Madam, What think you of him now pray?

Ind. I protest, I begin to fear he is wholly disinterested in what he does for me. On my Heart, he has no other View, but meer Pleasure in doing it, and has neither good or bad Designs upon me.

Ifab. Ah! dear Niece! don't be in Fear of both! I'll warrant you, you will know time enough, that he is not indifferent.

Ind. You please me when you tell me so: for, if he has any Wishes towards me, I know he will not pursue them but with Honour.

Ifab. I wish I were as confident of one, as t'other—I saw the respectful Downcast of his Eye, when you catch'd him gazing at you during the Musick: He I warrant, was surprized, as if he had been taken stealing your Watch. Oh! the undissembled guilty Look!

Ind. But did you observe any such Thing, really? I thought he looked most charmingly graceful! How engaging is Modesty, in a Man, when one knows there is a great Mind within—So tender a Confusion! and yet in other Respects, so much himself, so collected, so dauntless, so determin'd!

Ifab. Ah! Niece! there is a sort of Bashfulness which is the best Engine to carry on a shameless Purpose: some Men's Modesty serves their Wickedness, as Hypocrisy gains the Respect due to Piety: But I will own to you, there is one hopeful Symptom, if there could be such a thing as a disinterested Lover; But 'tis all a Perplexity till—till—till—

D

Ind.

30 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

Ind. Till what ?

Isab. Till I know whether Mr. *Myrtle* and Mr. *Bevil* are really Friends or Foes—and that I will be convinced of, before I sleep : for you shall not be deceiv'd.

Ind. I am sure, I never shall, if your Fears can guard me : In the mean time, I'll wrap myself up in the Integrity of mine own Heart, nor dare to doubt of his.

As conscious Honour all his Actions steers :

So conscious Innocence dispels my Fears. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE *Sealand's House.*

Enter Tom meeting Phillis.

Tom. WELL, *Phillis* ! —what, with a Face, as if you had never seen me before—What a Work have I to do now ? she has seen some new Visitant at their House, whose Airs she has catch'd, and is resolv'd to practice them upon me. Numberless are the Changes she'll dance thro' before she'll answer this plain Question ; *videlicet*, Have you delivered my Master's Letter to your Lady ? Nay, I know her too well, to ask an Account of it, in an ordinary Way ; I'll be in my Airs as well as she. [*Aside.*]

—Well, Madam, as unhappy as you are, at present pleas'd to make me, I would not, in the general, be any other than what I am ; I would not be a bit wiser, a bit richer, a bit taller, a bit shorter than I am this Instant.

[*Looking stedfastly at her.*]

Phil. Did ever any Body doubt, Master *Thomas*, but that you were extremely satisfi'd with your sweet self ?

Tom. I am indeed—The Thing I have least Reason to be satisfi'd with, is my Fortune, and I am glad of my Poverty ; Perhaps, if I were rich, I should overlook the finest Woman in the World, that wants nothing but Riches to be thought so.

Phil. How prettily was that said ? But I'll have a great deal more, before I'll say one Word. [*Aside.*]

Tom. I should perhaps. have been stupidly above her, had I not been her Equal ; and by not being her Equal,
NEVER

never had an Opportunity of being her Slave. I am my Master's Servant, for Hire; I am my Mistress's from Choice; would she but approve my Passion.

Phil. I think 'tis the first Time I ever heard you speak of it with any Sense of the Anguish, if you really do suffer any.

Tom. Ah! *Phillis*, can you doubt, after what you have seen?

Phil. I know not what I have seen, nor what I have heard: but since I am at Leisure, you may tell me. When you fell in Love with me; How you fell in Love with me; and what you suffered, or are ready to suffer for me.

Tom. Oh! the unmerciful Jade! when I am in haste about my Master's Letter—But I must go thro' it. [*Aside.* Ah! too well I remember when, and how, and on what Occasion I was first surpriz'd. It was on the first of *April*, one thousand seven hundred and fifteen, I came into Mr. *Sealand's* Service; I was then but a Hobble-de-Hoy and you a pretty little tight Girl, a favourite Hand-maid of the House-keeper.——At that time we neither of us knew what was in us: I remember, I was order'd to get out of the Window one Pair of Stairs to rub the Sashes clean——the Person employ'd on the inner-side, was your charming self, whom I had never seen before.

Phil. I think I remember the silly Accident: What made you, you Oaf, ready to fall down into the Street?

Tom. You know not, I warrant you—You could not guess what surprized me. You took no Delight, when you immediately grew wanton in your Conquest, and put your Lips close, and breathed upon the Glass, and when my Lips approach'd, a dirty Cloth you rubb'd against my Face, and hid your beateous Form; when I again drew near, you spit, and rubb'd and smil'd at my undoing.

Phil. What silly Thoughts you Men have!

Tom. We were *Pyramus* and *Thisbe*——but ten times harder was my Fate; *Pyramus* could peep only through a Wall, I saw her, saw my *Thisbe* in all her Beauty, but as much kept from her as if a hundred Walls between, for there was more, there was her Will against me——Would she but yet relent!—Oh *Phillis*! *Phillis*! shorten my Torment, and declare you pity me.

Phil. I believe 'tis very sufferable ; the Pain is not so exquisite, but that you may bear it a little longer.

Tom. Oh ! my charming *Phillis*, if all depended on my Fair One's Will, I could with Glory suffer—But, dearest Creature, consider our miserable State.

Phil. How ! miserable !

Tom. We are miserable to be in Love, and under the Command of others than those we love—with that generous Passion in the Heart, to be sent to and fro on Errands, call'd, check'd and rated for the meanest Trifles. Oh, *Phillis* ! you don't know how many *China* Cups, and Glasses my Passion for you has made me break, You have broke my Fortune, as well as my Heart,

Phil. Well, Mr. *Thomas*, I cannot but own to you, that I believe your Master writes, and you speak the best of any Men in the World. Never was Woman so well pleas'd with a Letter, as my young Lady was with his, and this is an Answer to it. [Gives him a Letter.]

Tom. This was well done, my dearest ; consider, we must strike out some pretty Livelihood for ourselves, by closing their Affairs : It will be nothing for them to give us a little Being of our own, some small Tenement out of their large Possessions : whatever they give us, 'twill be more than what they keep for themselves : One Acre with *Phillis*, wou'd be worth a whole Country without her.

Phil. O, could I but believe you !

Tom. If not the Utterance, believe the Touch of my Lips. [Kisses her.]

Phil. There's no Contradicting you ; how closely you argue *Tom* !

Tom. And will closer in due Time. But I must hasten with this Letter, to hasten towards the Possession of you. Then, *Phillis*, consider, how I must be revenged, look to it, of all your Skittishness, shy Looks, and at best but coy Compliances.

Phil. Oh ! *Tom*, you grow wanton and sensual as my Lady calls it, I must not endure it ; Oh ! Foh ! you are a Man, an odious filthy Male Creature ; you should behave if you had a right Sense, or were a Man of Sense, like Mr. *Cimberton*, with Distance and Indifference ; or let me see, some other becoming hard Word, with seeming inad-

inadvertency, and not rush on one as if you were seizing a Prey. But Hush—the Ladies are coming—Good Tom, don't kiss me above once, and begone——Lard, we have been Fooling and Tying, and not consider'd the main Business of our Masters and Mistresses.

Tom. Why, their Business is to be Fooling and Tying as soon as the Parchments are ready.

Phil. Well remember'd—Parchments—my Lady, to my Knowledge, is preparing Writings between her Coxcomb Cousin *Cimberton* and my Mistress; though my Master has an Eye to the Parchments already prepared between your Master Mr. *Bevil*, and my Mistress; and I believe my Mistress herself has signed and sealed, in her Heart, to Mr. *Myrtle*—Did I not bid you kiss me but once, and be gone? but I know you won't be satisfy'd.

Tom. No, you smooth Creature, how should I!

[*Kissing her Hand.*]

Phil. Well, since you are so humble, or so cool, as to ravish my Hand only, I'll take my Leave of you like a great Lady, and you a Man of Quality.

[*They salute formally.*]

Tom. Pox of all this State. [*Offers to kiss her more closely.*]

Phil. No, pr'ythee Tom, mind your Business. We must follow that Interest which will take; but endeavour at that which will be the most for us, and we like most—O here! my young Mistress! [*Tom taps her Neck behind and kisses his Fingers.*] Go you liquorish Fool. [*Exit Tom.*]

Enter Lucinda.

Luc. Who was that you were hurrying away?

Phil. One that I'd no mind to part with.

Luc. Why did you turn him away then?

Phil. For your Ladyship's Service, to carry your Ladyship's Letter to his Master: I could hardly get the Rogue away.

Luc. Why, has he so little Love for his Master?

Phil. No; but he has so much Love for his Mistress.

Luc. But, I thought, I heard him kiss you. Why do you suffer that?

Phil. Why, Madam, we vulgar take it to be a Sign of Love; we Servants, we poor People, that have nothing but our Persons to bestow, or treat for, are forced to deal and bargain by way of Sample; and therefore, as

34 **THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.**

we have no Parchments or Wax necessary in our Agreements, we squeeze with our Hands, and seal with our Lips, to ratify Vows and Promises.

Luc. But can't you trust one another, without such Earnest down?

Phil. We don't think it safe, any more than you Gentry to come together without Deeds executed.

Luc. Thou art a pert merry Hussey.

Phil. I wish Madam, your Lover and you were as happy as *Tom*, and your Servant are.

Luc. You grow impertinent.

Phil. I have done, Madam! and I won't ask you what you intend to do with Mr. *Myrtle*, what your Father will do with Mr. *Bewil*, nor what you all, especially my Lady, mean by admitting Mr. *Cimberton* as particularly here, as if he were married to you already; nay, you are married actually as far as people of quality are.

Luc. How is that?

Phil. You have different Beds in the same House.

Luc. Pshaw! I have a very great Value for Mr. *Bewil*, but have absolutely put an End to his Pretensions in the Letter I gave you for him: But my Father, in his Heart, still has a mind to him, were it not for this Woman they talk of; and, I am apt to imagine he is married to her, or never designs to marry at all.

Phil. Then Mr. *Myrtle*——

Luc. He had my Parents leave to apply to me, and by that has won me, and my Affections: who is to have this Body of mine, without 'em, it seems, is nothing to me; my Mother says 'tis indecent for me to let my Thoughts stray about the Person of my Husband: nay, she says, a Maid, rigidly virtuous, tho' she may have been where her Lover was a thousand times, should not have made Observations enough, to know him from another man, when she sees him in a third Place.

Phil. That is more than the severity of a Nun, for not to see when one may, is hardly possible; not to see when one can't, is very easy: at this rate, Madam, there are a great many whom you have not seen, who——

Luc. Mamma says, the first time you see your Husband should be at that Instant he is made so; when your Father with the help of the Minister gives you to him, then
you

you are to see him, then you are to observe and take Notice of him, because then you are to obey him.

Phil. But does not my Lady remember, you are to Love as well as Obey?

Luc. To love is a Passion, 'tis a Desire, and we must have no Desires. Oh! I cannot endure the Reflection! With what insensibility on my part, with what more than Patience, have I been exposed, and offer'd to some awkward Booby or other, in every County of *Great Britain*?

Phil. Indeed, Madam, I wonder I never heard you speak of it before with this Indignation.

Luc. Every Corner of the Land has presented me with a wealthy Coxcomb. As fast as one Treaty has gone off, another has come on, till my Name and Person have been the Tittle Tattle of the whole Town: What is this World come to! No Shame left! to be barter'd for, like the Beasts of the Field, that in such an Instance, as coming together to an entire familiarity, and Union of Soul and Body; Oh! and this, without being so much as Well-wishers to each other, but for increase of Fortune.

Phil. But, Madam, all these Vexations will end very soon, in one for all: Mr. *Cimberton* is your Mother's Kinsman, and three hundred years an odler Gentleman than any Lover you ever had; for which reason, with that of his prodigious large Estate, she is resolved on him, and has sent to consult the Lawyers accordingly. Nay, has (whether you know it or no) been in Treaty with Sir *Geoffrey*, who, to join in the Settlement, has accepted of a Sum to do it, and is every moment expected in town for that Purpose.

Luc. How do you get all this Intelligence?

Phil. By an art I have, I thank my Stars, beyond all the Waiting-maids in *Great-Britain*; the Art of List'ning, Madam, for your Ladyship's Service.

Luc. I shall soon know as much as you do; leave me, leave me, *Phillis*, be gone: Here, here, I will turn you out. My Mother says I must not converse with my Servants; tho' I must converse with no one else. [*Exit Phillis*] How unhappy are we who are born to great Fortunes! No one looks at us with Indifference, or acts towards us on the Foot of plain Dealing; yet by all I have been hitherto offer'd to, or treated for, I have been us'd with the most agreeable of all Abuses, Flattery; but now by
this

36 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

this Flegmatic Fool, I am us'd as nothing, or a meer Thing: He forsooth! is too wise, too learned to have any Regard to Desires, and I know not what the learned Oaf calls Sentiments of Love and Passion—here he comes with my Mother—'Tis much if he looks at me; or if he does, takes no more Notice of me, than of any othet moveable in the Room. [*Enter Mrs. Seal and Mr. Cimberton.*]

Mrs. Seal. How do I admire this noble, this learned Taste of yours, and the worthy regard you have to your own ancient and honourable House, in consulting a means to keep the blood as pure and regularly descended as may be.

Cimb. Why, really Madam, the young Women of this Age are treated with Discourses of such a Tendency and their Imaginations so bewilder'd in Flesh and Blood, that a Man of Reason can't talk to be understood: They have no Ideas of Happiness, but are more gross than the Gratification of Hunger and Thirst.

Luc. With how much reflection he is a Coxcomb! [*Aside.*]

Cimb. And in Truth, Madam, I have consider'd it, as a most brutal Custom, that Persons of the first Character in the World, should go as ordinarily, and with as little Shame to Bed as to Dinner with one another. They proceed to the Propagation of the Species, as openly, as to the Preservation of the individual.

Luc. She that willingly goes to Bed to thee, must have no Shame, I'm sure. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Seal. Oh Cousin Cimberton! Cousin Cimberton! how abstracted, how refin'd, is your Sense of things! but indeed it is too true, there is nothing so ordinary as to say, in the best govern'd Families, my Master and Lady are gone to bed; one does not know but it might have been said of one's self. [*Hiding her Face with her Fan.*]

Cimb. Lycurgus, Madam, instituted otherwise? among the *Lacedæmonians*, the whole Female World was pregnant, but none, but the Mothers themselves, knew by whom; their Meetings were secret, and the amorous Congress always by Stealth; and no such professed Doings between the Sexes, as tolerated among us, under the audacious Word, Marriage.

Mrs. Seal. Oh! had I lived in those Days, and been a Matron of *Sparta*, one might, with less Indecency, have had ten Children, according to that modest Institution, than one under the confusion of our modern barefac'd manner.

Luc.

The CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 37

Luc. And yet, poor Woman, she has gone thro' the whole ceremony, and here I stand a melancholy Proof of it.

Mrs. Seal. We will talk then of Business. That Girl walking about the Room there is to be your Wife. She has I confess, no Ideas, no Sentiments, that speak her born of a thinking Mother.

Cimb. I have observed her; her lively Look, free Air, and disengaged Countenance speak her very—

Luc. Very, what?

Cimb. If you please, Madam—to set her a little that way.

Mrs. Seal. *Lucinda*, say nothing to him, you are not a Match for him; when you are married, you may speak to such a Husband, when you are spoken to. But I'm disposing of you, above yourself, every Way.

Cimb. Madam, you cannot but observe the Inconveniencies I expose myself to, in hopes that your Ladyship will be the Confort of my better Part: As for the young Woman, she is rather an Impediment than help to a Man of Letters and Speculation. Madam, there is no Reflection, no Philosophy can at all Times, subdue the sensitive Life, but the Animal shall sometimes carry away the Man! Ha! ay, the Vermillion of her Lips.

Luc. Pray don't talk of me thus.

Cimb. The pretty enough—Pant of her Bosom.

Luc. Sir; Madam don't you hear him!

Cimb. Her forward Chest.

Luc. Intolerable!

Cimb. High Health.

Luc. The grave easy Impudence of him!

Cimb. Proud Heart.

Luc. Stupid Coxcomb!

Cimb. I say, Madam, her Impatience, while we are looking at her throws out all Attractions—her Arms—her Neck—what a spring in her Step.

Luc. Don't you run me over thus, you strange unaccountable

Cimb. What an Elasticity in her Veins and Arteries!

Luc. I have no Veins, no Arteries.

Mrs. Seal. Oh Child, hear him, he talks finely, he's a Scholar, he knows what you have.

Cimb. The speaking Invitation of her Shape, the gathering

38 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

thering of herself up, and the Indignation you see in the pretty little thing—now I am considering her, on this Occasion but as one that is to be pregnant.

Luc. The familiar, learned, unseasonable Puppy!

[*Aside.*

Cimb. And pregnant undoubtedly she will be yearly. I fear, I shan't for many Years, have Discretion enough to give her a fallow Season.

Luc. Monster! there's no bearing it. The hideous Sot!—there's no enduring it, to be thus surveyed like a Steed at Sale.

Cimb. At Sale! she's very illiterate—But she's very well limb'd too; turn her in; I see what she is.

[*Exit Lucinda in a Rage.*

Mrs. Seal. Go you Creature, I'm a sham'd of you.

Cimb. No harm done—you know, Madam, the better sort of People, as I observed to you, treat by their Lawyers of Weddings (*Adjusting himself at the Glass.*)

And the Woman in the Bargain, like the Mansion-house in the Sale of the Estate, is thrown in, and what that is whether good or bad, is not at all consider'd.

Mrs. Seal. I grant it, and therefore make no Demand for her youth and Beauty, and every other Accomplishment, as the common World think 'em, because she's not polite.

Cimb. Madam, I know your exalted Understanding, abstracted as it is, from vulgar Prejudices, will not be offended, when I declare to you, I marry to have an Heir to my Estate, and not to beget a Colony, or a Plantation: This young Woman's Beauty, and Constitution, will demand Provision for a tenth Child at least.

Mrs. Seal. With all that Wit and Learning, how Considerate! What an Oeconomist! [*Aside*—Sir, I cannot make her any other than she is; or say she is much better than the other young Women of this Age, or fit for much, besides being a Mother; but I have given Directions for the Marriage Settlements, and Sir *Geoffrey Cimberton's* Council is to meet us here, at this Hour, concerning his joining in the Deed, which when executed, makes you capable of settling what is due to *Lucinda's* Fortune: Herself, as I told you, I say nothing of.

Cimb. No, no, indeed, Madam, it is not usual, and I must depend upon my own Reflection, and Philosophy, not to overstock my Family.

Mrs.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 39

Mrs. Seal. I cannot help her, Cousin *Cimberton*; but she is for ought I see, as well as the Daughter of any body else.

Cimb. That is very true, Madam.

Enter a Servant who whispers Mrs. Seal.

Mrs. Seal. The Lawyers are come, and now we are to hear what they have resolved as to the point whether 'tis necessary that Sir *Geoffry* should join in the Settlement, as being what they call in the Remainder. But, good Cousin, you must have Patience with 'em. These Lawyers, I am told, are of a different kind, one is what they call a Chamber Council, the other a Pleader: The Conveyancer is slow from an Imperfection in his Speech, and therefore shuns the Bar, but extremely passionate and impatient of Contradiction: the other is as warm as he; but has a Tongue so voluble, and a Head so conceited, he will suffer no body to speak but himself.

Cimb. You mean old Serjeant *Target*, and Counsellor *Bramble*? I have heard of 'em.

Mrs. Seal. The same: shew in the Gentlemen.

[Exit Servant.]

Re-enter Servant, introducing Myrtle and Tom, disguised as Bromble and Target.

Mrs. Seal. Gentlemen this is the Party concerned, Mr. *Cimberton*; and hope you have considered of the Matter,

Tar. Yes, Madam, we have agreed that it must be by indent—dent—dent—dent——

Bram. Yes, Madam, Mr. *Serjeant* and myself have agreed, as he is pleased to inform you, that it must be an Indenture Tripartite, and tripartite let it be, for Sir *Geoffry* must needs be a party; old *Cimberton*, in the Year 1619, says in that ancient Roll, in Mr. *Serjeant's* Hands, as recourse thereto being had, will more at large appear.—

Tar. Yes, and by the Deeds in your Hands, it appears that——

Bram. Mr. *Serjeant*, I beg of you to make no Inferences upon what is in our Custody; but to speak to the Titles in your own Deeds—I shall not shew that Deed till my Client is in Town.

Cimb. You know best your own Methods.

Mrs. Seal. The single Question is, whether the Intail is such, that my Cousin Sir *Geoffry* is necessary in this Affair?

Bram. Yes, as to the Lordship of *Tretriplet*, but not as to the Messuage of *Grimgribler*.

Tar.

Tar. I say that *Gr—gr—that Gr—gr—Grimgribber*, *Grimgribber* is in us. That is to say, the Remainder thereof, as well as that of *Tr——tr——Triplet*.

Bram. You go upon the Deed of Sir *Ralph* made in the middle of the last Century, precedent to that in which old *Cimberton* made over the Remainder, and made it pass to the Heirs general, by which your Client comes in; and I question whether the Remainder even of *Tretriplet* is in him—But we are willing to wave that, and give him a valuable Consideration, But we shall not purchase what is in us for ever, a *Grimgribber* is, at the rate we guard against the Contingent of Mr. *Cimberton* having no Son—Then we know Sir *Geoffry* is the first of the Collateral Male Line in this Family—Yet—

Tar. Sir, *Gr—gr—ber* is—

Bram. I apprehend you very well, and your Argument might be of Force, and we would be inclined to hear that in all its Parts—But Sir, I see very plain what you are going into—I tell you it is as probable a Contingent that Sir *Geoffry* may die before Mr. *Cimberton*, as that he may outlive him.

Tar. Sir, we are not ripe for that yet, but I must say—

Bram. Sir, I allow you the whole extent of that Argument; but that will go no farther than as to the Claimants under old *Cimberton*—I am of opinion that according to the Instruction of Sir *Ralph*, he could not dock the Entail, and then create a new Estate for the Heirs General.

Tar. Sir I have no Patience to be told that, when *Gr——gr——ber——*

Bram. I will allow it you, Mr. Sergeant; but there must be the Word Heirs for ever, to make such an Estate as you pretend.

Cimb. I must be impartial, tho' you are Council for my side of the Question—Were it not that you are so good as to allow him what he has not said, I should think it very hard you should answer him without hearing him—But Gentlemen, I believe you have both considered this Matter, and are firm in your different Opinions: 'Twere better therefore you proceeded according to the particular Sense of each of you, and give your Thoughts directly in Writing—And do you see Sirs, pray let me have a Copy of what you say in *English*.

Bram.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

41

Bram. Why, what is all we have been saying?—In *English*! Oh! but I forgot myself, you are a Wit—But however, to please you, Sir, you shall have it, in as plain Terms as the Law will admit of.

Cimb. But I would have it Sir, without Delay.

Bramb. That, Sir, The Law will not admit of: the Courts are sitting at *Westminster*, and I am this Moment obliged to be at every one of them, and 'twould be wrong if I should not be in the Hall to attend one of them at least, the rest would take it ill else—Therefore I must leave what I have said to Mr. *Serjeant's* Consideration, and I will digest his Arguments on my Part, and you shall hear from me again, Sir, [*Exit Bramble.*]

Tar. Agreed, agreed.

Cimb. Mr. *Bramble* is very quick—he parted a little abruptly.

Tar. He could not bear my Argument, I pincht him to the quick about that *Gr—gr—ber.*

Mrs. Seal. I saw that, for he durst not so much as hear you—I shall send to you, Mr. *Serjeant*, as soon as Sir *Geoffrey* comes to Town, and then I hope all may be adjusted.

Tar. I shall be at my chambers, at my usual hours. [*Exit.*]

Cimb. Madam, if you please, I'll now attend you to the Tea-table, where I shall hear from your Ladyship, Reason and good Sense, after all this Law and Gibberish.

Mrs. Seal. 'tis a wonderful Thing, Sir, that Men of Professions do not study to talk the Substance of what they have to say, in the Language of the rest of the World: Sure, they'd find their Account in it.

Cimb. They might, perhaps, Madam, with People of your good Sense; but with the generality it would never do: The Vulgar would have no Respect for Truth and Knowledge, if they were exposed to naked View.

Truth is too simple, of all Art bereav'd:

Since the World will—why let it be deceiv'd.

(*Exeunt.*)

E

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE, Bevil Junior's Lodgings.

Bevil jun. with a Letter in his Hand, follow'd by Tom.

Tom. UPON my Life, Sir, I know nothing of the Matter: I never open'd my Lips to Mr. *Myrtle* about any thing of your honour's letter to Madam *Lucinda*.

Bev. What's the Fool in such a Fright for? I don't suppose you did: what I would know is, whether Mr. *Myrtle* shewed any Suspicion, or ask'd you any Questions, to lead you to say casually, that you had carry'd any such Letter for me, this Morning.

Tom. Why Sir, if he did ask me any Questions, how could I help it?

Bev. I don't say he could, Oaf! I am not questioning you, but him: What did he say to you?

Tom. Why, Sir, when I came to his Chambers, to be dress'd for the Lawyer's Part, your Honour was pleas'd to put me upon, he asked me, if I had been at Mr. *Sealand's* this Morning?—So I told him, Sir, I often went thither—because, Sir, if I had not said that, he might have thought, there was something more, in my going now, than at another Time.

Bev. Very well!—The Fellow's Caution, I find has given him this Jealousy. (*Aside*) did he ask you no other Questions?

Tom. Yes, Sir——now I remember, as we came away in the Hackney Coach from Mr. *Sealand's*, *Tom*, says he, as I came into your Master this Morning, he bid you go for an Answer to the Letter he had sent. Pray did you bring him any? says he—Ah! says I, Sir, your Honour is pleas'd to joke with me, you have a mind to know whether I can keep a Secret or no?

Bev. And so, by shewing him you could, you told him you had one?

Tom. Sir——

[*Confused.*

Bev. What mean Actions does Jealousy make a Man stoop to? How poorly has he us'd Art, with a Servant, to make him betray his own Master? Well! and when did he give you this Letter for for me?

Tom.

Tom. Sir, he writ it, before he pulled off his Lawyer's Gown, at his own Chambers.

Rev. Very well; and what did he say, when you brought him my Answer to it?

Tom. He look'd a little out of Humour, Sir, and said, it was very well.

Rev. I knew he would be grave upon't, wait without.

Tom. Humph! gad, I don't like this! I am afraid we are all in the wrong Box here—— (Exit Tom.

Rev. I put on a Serenity, while my Fellow was present: but I have never been more thoroughly disturb'd; this hot Man! to write me a Challenge, on supposed artificial Dealing, when I profess'd myself his Friend! I can live contented without Glory; but I cannot suffer Shame. What's to be done? But first let me consider Lucinda's Letter again. (Reads

S I R,

I Hope it is consistent with the Laws a Woman ought to impose upon herself, to acknowledge, that your Manner of declining a Treaty of Marriage in our Family, and desiring the Refusal may come from me, has something more engaging in it, than the Courtship of him, who, I fear will fall to my Lot; except your Friend exerts himself, for our common Safety, and Happiness: I have Reason for desiring Mr. Myrtle may not know of this Letter, till hereafter, and am your most obliged humble Servant,
Lucinda Sealand.

Well, but Postscript,

I won't upon second Thoughts hide any Thing from you. But my Reason for concealing this is, that Mr. Myrtle has a jealousy in his Temper, which gives me some Terrors; but my Esteem for him incline me to hope that, only an ill Effect which sometime accompanies a tender Love; and what may be cured, by a careful and unblameable Conduct.

Thus has this Lady made me her Friend and Confident and put herself in a kind, under my Protection: I cannot tell him immediately the Purport of her letter, except I could cure him of the violent and untractable Passion of Jealousy, and to serve him, and her, by disobeying her, in the Article of Secrecy, more than I should by complying with her Directions—but then this Duelling which Custom has impos'd upon every Man, who would live with Reputation and Honour in the World:—How

must I preserve myself from Imputations there? He'll, forsooth, call it, or think it Fear, if I explain without Fighting—But his Letter—I'll read it again——

S I R,

YOU have used me basely, in corresponding, and carrying on a Treaty where you told me you were indifferent! I have changed my Sword since I saw you; which Advertisement I thought proper to send you against the next Meeting, between you and the injur'd.

Charles Myrtle.

Enter Tom.

Tom. Mr. Myrtle, Sir: would your Honour please to see him?

Bev. Why you stupid Creature! Let Mr. Myrtle wait at my Lodgings! shew him up. (*Exit Tom.*) Well! I am resolv'd upon my Carriage to him—He is in Love, and in every Circumstance of Life a little distrustful, which I must allow for—but here he is.

Enter Tom introducing Myrtle.

Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for this Honour—But, Sir, you with your very discerning Face, leave the Room. (*Exit Tom.*) Well, Mr. Myrtle, your Commands with me?

Myrt. The Time, the Place, our long Acquaintance and many other Circumstances which affect me on this Occasion, oblige me, without farther Ceremony, or conference, to desire you would not only, as you already have, acknowledge the Receipt of my Letter, but also comply with the Request in it. I must have farther Notice taken of my Message than these half Lines,—I have yours.—I shall be at home——

Bev. Sir, I own, I have receiv'd a Letter from you in a very unusual Style; but as I design every thing in this matter shall be your own Action, your own Seeking, I shall understand nothing but what you are pleas'd to confirm Face to Face, and I have already forgot the Contents of your Epistle.

Myrt. This cool Manner is very agreeable to the Abuse you have already made of my Simplicity and Frankness; and I see your Moderation tends to your own Advantage, and not mine; to your own Safety; not consideration of your Friend.

Bev. My own Safety, Mr. Myrtle!

Myrt.

Myrt. Your own Safety, Mr. *Bevil*.

Bev. Look you Mr. *Myrtle*, there's no disguising that I understand what you would be at—But, Sir, you know, I have often dared to disapprove of the Decisions a Tyrant Custom has introduced to the Breach of Laws both Divine and Human.

Myrt. Mr. *Bevil*, Mr. *Bevil*, it would be a good first Principle in those who have so tender a Conscience that way, to have as much Abhorrence of doing Injuries, as—

Bev. As what?

Myrt. As fear of answering for them.

Bev. As fear of answering for 'em! But that Apprehension is just or blameable, according to the Object of that Fear—I have often told you in Confidence of Heart, I abhor'd the daring to offend the Author of Life, and rushing into his Presence—I say, by the very same Act, to commit the Crime against him, and immediately to urge on to his Tribunal.

Myrt. Mr. *Bevil*, I must tell you, this Coolness, this Gravity, this shew of Conscience, shall never cheat me of my Mistress. You have indeed, the best Excuse for Life, the Hopes of possessing *Lucinda*: But consider Sir, I have as much Reason to be weary of it, if I am to lose her; and my first Attempt to recover her, shall be to let her see the dauntless Man, who is to be her Guardian and Protector.

Bev. Sir, shew me but the least Glimse of Argument, that I am autho ized by my own Hand, to vindicate any lawless Insult of this Nature, and I will shew thee—to chastise thee—hardly deserves the Name of Courage—slight, inconsiderate Man—There is, Mr. *Myrtle*, no such Terror in quick Anger: and you shall you know not why, be cool, as you have you know not why, been warm.

Myrt. Is the Woman one loves, so little an Occasion of Anger? You perhaps, who know not what 'tis to love, who have your Ready, your Commodious, your Foreign Trinket, for your loose Hours; and from your Fortune, your specious outward Carriage, and other lucky Circumstances, as easy a Way to the possession of a Woman of Honour; you know nothing of what it is to be alarm'd, to be distracted, with Anxiety and Terror of losing more than Life: Your Marriage, happy Man! goes on like common Business, and in the Interim, you have your

46 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

rambling captive, your *Indian* Princess, for your soft Moments of Dalliance, your convenient, your ready *Indiana*.

Bev. You have touch'd me beyond the Patience of a Man, and I'm excusable in the Guard of Innocence (or from the Infirmary of human Nature, which can bear no more) to accept your Invitation, and observe your Letter——Sir, I'll attend you.

Enter Tom.

Tom. Did you call, Sir, I thought you did: I heard you speak aloud.

Bev. Yes, go call a Coach.

Tom. Sir—Master—Mr. *Myrtle*—Friends—Gentlemen—what d'ye mean, I am but a Servant, or——

Bev. Call a Coach. *[Exit Tom.]*

(A long Pause walking sullenly by each other.)

Afide] Shall I (though provok'd to the uttermost) recover myself at the Entrance of a third Person, and that my Servant too, and not have Respect enough to all I have ever been receiving from Infancy, the Obligation to the best of Fathers, to an unhappy Virgin too, whose Life depends on mine. *[Shutting the Door.]*

To Myrtle. I have, thank Heaven, had Time to recollect myself, and shall not, for fear of what such a rash Man as you think of me, keep longer unexplain'd the false Appearances, under which your Infirmary of Temper makes you suffer; when, perhaps, too much regard to a false Point of Honour, makes me prolong that Suffering.

Myrt. I am sure, Mr. *Bevil* cannot doubt, but I had rather have Satisfaction from his Innocence than his Sword.

Bev. Why then would you ask it first that Way?

Myrt. Consider you kept your Temper yourself no longer than till I spoke to the Disadvantage of her you lov'd.

Bev. True. But let me tell you, I have saved you from the most exquisite Distress, even tho' you had succeeded in the Dispute: I know you so well, that I am sure to have found this Letter about a Man you had kill'd would have been worse than Death to yourself—Read it—[When he is thoroughly mortify'd, and Shame has got the better of Jealousy, when he has seen himself thoroughly, he will deserve to be assisted towards obtaining *Lucinda*.]

Myrt. With what a Superiority has he turn'd the Injury on me, as the Aggressor?—I begin to fear, I have been

too far transported—*A Treaty in our Family!* is not that saying too much? I shall relapse—But I find (on the Post-script) *something like Jealousy*—with what Face can I see my Benefactor? my Advocate? whom I have treated like a Betrayer—Oh! *Bevil*, with what Words shall I—

Bew. There needs none; to convince is much more than to conquer.

Myrt. But can you—

Bew. You have overpaid the Inquietude you gave me, in the Change I see in you towards me: Alas! what Machines are we! thy Face is alter'd to that of another Man; to that of my Companion, my Friend.

Myrt. That I could be such a precipitate Wretch!

Bew. Pray no more.

Myrt. Let me now reflect how many Friends have died by the Hands of Friends for want of Temper; and you must give me Leave to say again, and again, how much I am beholden to that superior Spirit you have subdu'd me with—what would become of one of us, or perhaps both, had you been as weak as I was, and as incapable of Reason?

Bew. I congratulate to us both the Escape from our selves, and hope the Memory of it will make us dearer Friends than ever.

Myrt. Dear *Bevil*, your friendly Conduct has convinc'd me that there is nothing manly, but what is conducted by Reason, and agreeable to the Practice of Virtue and Justice. And yet, how many have been sacrific'd to that Idol, the unreasonable Opinion of Men! Nay, they are so ridiculous in it, that they often use their Swords against each other with dissembled anger and real Fear.

Betray'd by Honour, and compell'd by Shame,

They hazard Being: to preserve a Name:

Nor dare enquire into the dread mistake,

Till plung'd in sad Eternity they wake. [Exeunt.

S C E N E, *St. James's Park.*

Enter Sir John Bevil, and Mr. Sealand.

Sir John Bew. Give me Leave, however *Mr. Sealand* as we are upon a Treaty for uniting our Families, to mention only the Business of an ancient House—Genealogy and Descent are to be of some Consideration in an Affair of this Sort—

Mr

48 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

Mr. *Seal*. Geneology and Descent!—Sir, there has been in our family a very large one—There was *Galfid* the Father of *Edward*, the Father of *Ptolemy*, the Father of *Crassus*, the Father of Earl *Richard*, the Father of *Henry* the Marquis, the Father of Duke *John*——

Sir *J. Bev*. What, do you rave, Mr. *Sealand*? all these great Names in your Family.

Mr. *Seal*. These; yes, Sir—I have heard my Father name 'em all, and more.

Sir *J. Bev*. Ay, Sir?—and did he say they were all in your Family?

Mr. *Seal*. Yes, Sir, he kept 'em all—he was the greatest Cocker in *England*—he said, Duke *John* won him many Battles, and never lost one.

Sir *J. Bev*. Oh Sir your Servant, you are laughing at my laying any Strefs upon Descent—but I must tell you Sir, I never knew any one but he that wanted that Advantage, turn it into Ridicule.

Mr. *Seal*. And I never knew any one, who had many better Advantages, put that into his Account—But, Sir *John*, value yourself as you please upon your ancient House, I am to talk freely of every thing you are pleas'd to put into your Bill of Rates, on this Occasion—yet Sir, I have made no Objection to your Son's Family—'Tis his Morals that I doubt.

Sir *J. Bev*. Sir, I can't help saying, that what might injure a Citizen's Credit, may be no Stain to a Gentleman's Honour.

Mr. *Seal*. Sir *John*, the Honour of a Gentleman is liable to be tainted, by as small a Matter as the Credit of a Trader; we are talking of a Marriage, and in such a Case, the Father of a young Woman will not think it an Addition to the Honour or Credit of her Lover—that he is a Keeper——

Sir *J. Bev*. Mr. *Sealand*, don't take upon you, to spoil my Son's Marriage with any Woman else.

Mr. *Seal*. Sir *John*, let him apply to any Woman else, and have as many Mistresses as he pleases——

Sir *J. Bev*. My Son, Sir, is a discreet and sober Gentleman——

Mr. *Seal*. Sir, I never saw a Man that wenched soberly and discreetly, that ever left it off—the Decency observed

serv'd in the Practice, hides, even from the Sinner, the Iniquity of it. They pursue it, not that their Appetites hurry 'em away ; but, I warrant you, because, 'tis their Opinion, they may do it.

Sir *J. Bev.* Were what you suspect a Truth—do you design to keep your Daughter a Virgin, 'till you find a Man unblemish'd that way ?

Mr. *Seal.* Sir, as much a Cit as you take me for—I know the Town and the World—and give me leave to say, that we Merchants are a Species of Gentry, that have grown into the World this last Century, and are as honourable and almost as useful as you landed Folks, that have always thought yourselves so much above us ; for your trading, forsooth ! is extended no farther, than a Load of Hay, or a fat Ox—You are pleasant people, indeed, because you are generally bred up to be lazy, therefore, I warrant you, Industry is dishonourable.

Sir *J. Bev.* Be not offended, Sir ; let us go back to our Point.

Mr. *Seal.* Oh ! not at all offended—but I don't love to leave any Part of the Account unclos'd—look you Sir *John*, Comparisons are odious, and more particularly so, on Occasions of this kind, when we are projecting Races, that are to be made out of both Sides of the Comparisons.

Sir *J. Bev.* But my Son, Sir, is in the Eye of the World, a Gentleman of Merit.

Mr. *Seal.* I own to you, I think him so—But Sir *John* I am a Man exercised, and experienc'd in Chances, and Disasters ; I lost in my earlier Years, a very fine Wife, and with her a poor little Infant ; this makes me, perhaps, over cautious, to preserve the second Bounty of Providence to me, and be as careful, as I can, of this Child—you'll pardon me, my poor Girl, Sir, is as valuable to me as your boasted Son, to you.

Sir *J. Bev.* Why, that's one very good Reason, Mr. *Sealand*, why I wish my Son had her.

Mr. *Seal.* There is nothing but this strange Lady here this *Incognita*, that can be objected to him—here and there a Man falls in Love with an artful Creature, and gives up all the Motives of Life to that one Passion.

Sir *J. Bev.* A Man of my Son's Understanding, cannot be supposed to be one of them.

Mr

50 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

Mr. *Seal*. Very wise Men have been so enslav'd ; and when a Man marries with one of them upon his Hands, whether mov'd from the Demand of the World, or slighter Reasons ; such a Husband soils with his Wife for a Month perhaps—then Good b'w'y' Madam—the Show's over—ah ! *John Dryden* points out such a Husband to a Hair, where he says,

And while abroad so prodigal the Dolt is,
Poor Spouse at home as ragged as a Colt is.

Now in plain Terms, Sir, I shall not care to have my poor Girl turn'd grazing, and that must be the case, when—

Sir *J. Bev*. But pray consider, Sir, my Son—

Mr. *Seal*. Look you, Sir, I'll make the Matter short : this unknown Lady, as I told you, is all the Objections I have to him : But, one way or other, he is, or has been certainly engag'd to her—I am therefore resolv'd, this very Afternoon to visit her : Now from her Behaviour, or Appearance, I shall soon be let into, what I may fear or hope for.

Sir *J. Bev*. Sir, I am very confident, there can be nothing enquir'd into, relating to my Son, that will not, upon being understood, turn to his Advantage.

Mr. *Seal*. I hope that as sincerely, as you believe it—Sir *John Bevil*, when I am satisfied in this great Point, if your Son's Conduct answers the Character you give him, I shall wish your Alliance more than that of any Gentleman in *Great-Britain*, and so your Servant. [Exit.

Sir *J. Bev*. He is gone, in a way but barely civil ; but his great Wealth, and the Merit of his only Child, the Heirefs of it, are not to be lost for a little Peevishness.—

Enter *Humphrey*.

Oh ! *Humphrey*, you are come in a seasonable Minute ; I want to talk to thee, and to tell thee, that my Head and Heart are on the Rack about my Son.

Humph. Sir, you may trust his Discretion, I am sure you may.

Sir *J. Bev*. Why, I do believe I may, and yet I'm in a thousand Fears when I lay this vast Wealth before me : When I consider his Prepossessions, either generous, to a Folly, in an honourable Love ; or abandon'd, past Redemption, in a vicious one ; and, from the one or the other, his Insensibility to the fairest Prospect, towards doubling

doubling our Estate: a Father who knows how useful Wealth is, and how necessary, even to those who despise it, I say a Father, *Humphrey*, a Father cannot bear it.

Humph. Be not transported, Sir; you will grow incapable of taking any Resolution, in your Perplexity.

Sir J. Bev. Yet, as angry as I am with him, I would not have him surpriz'd in any thing—This mercantile rough Man may go grossly into the Examination of this Matter, and talk to the Gentleman so as to——

Humph. No, I hope not in an abrupt Manner.

Sir J. Bev. No I hope not! Why, dost thou know any thing of her, or of him, or of any thing of it, or all of it?

Humph. My dear Master, I know so much; that I told him this very Day, you had Reason to be secretly out of Humour about her.

Sir J. Bev. Did you go so far? Well, what said he to that?

Humph. His Words were looking upon me stedfastly: *Humphrey*, says he, that Woman is a Woman of Honour.

Sir J. Bev. How! do you think he is married to her, or designs to marry her?

Humph. I can say nothing to the latter—But he says, he can marry no one without your Consent, while you are living.

Sir J. Bev. If he said so much, I know he scorns to break his Word with me.

Humph. I am sure of that.

Sir J. Bev. You are sure of that—Well! that's some Comfort—Then I have nothing to do but to see the Bottom of this Matter during this present Ruffle——Oh, *Humphrey*.——

Humph. You are not ill, I hope, Sir.

Sir J. Bev. Yes, a Man is very ill, that's in a very ill Humour: To be a Father, is to be in Care for one, whom you oftener disoblige than please, by that very Care—Oh! that Sons could know the Duty to a Father, before they themselves are Fathers—but perhaps you'll say now that I am one of the happiest Fathers in the World; but, I assure you, that one of the very unhappiest is not a Condition to be envied.

Humph. Sir, your Pain arises not from the Thing itself, but your particular Sense of it—You are over fond,

52 *THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.*

may, give me leave to say, you are unjustly apprehensive from your Fondness : my Master *Bevil* never disoblig'd you, and he will, I know he will, do every thing you ought to expect.

Sir J. Bev. He won't take all this Money with this Girl—For ought I know he will, forsooth, have so much Moderation, as to think he ought not to force his Liking for any Consideration.

Humph. He is to marry her, not you ; he is to live with her, not you, Sir.

Sir J. Bev. I know not what to think : But, I know nothing can be more miserable than to be in this Doubt—Follow me : I must come to some Resolution. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E, *Bevil junior's Lodgings.*

Enter Tom and Phillis.

Tom. Well, Madam, if you must speak with Mr. *Myrtle*, you shall ; he is now with my Master in the Library.

Phil. But you must leave me alone with him, for he can't make me a Present, nor I so handsomely take any thing from him before you ; it would not be decent.

Tom. It will be very decent, indeed, for me to retire, and leave my Mistress with another Man.

Phil. He is a Gentleman, and will treat one properly.

Tom. I believe so—but, however, I won't be far off, and therefore will venture to trust you : I'll call him to you. [*Exit Tom.*]

Phil. What a deal of Pother and Sputter here is, between my Mistress, and Mr. *Myrtle*, from meer Punctilio? I could any Hour of the Day get her to her Lover, and would do it—But she, forsooth, will allow no Plot to get him ; but if he can come to her, I know she will be glad of it : I must therefore do her an acceptable Violence, and surprize her into his Arms. I am sure I go by the best Rule imaginable : If she were my Maid, I should think her the best Servant in the World for doing so by me.

Enter Myrtle and Tom.

Oh Sir! You and Mr. *Bevil*, are fine Gentlemen, to let the Lady remain under such Difficulties as my poor Mistress, and no Attempt to set her at Liberty, or release her from the Danger of being instantly married to *Cimberton*.

Myrt.

Myrt. *Tom* has been telling—But what is to be done?

Phil. What is to be done—when a Man can't come at his Mistress!—Why can't you fire our House, or the next House to us, to make us run out and you take us?

Myrt. How, Mrs. *Phillis*—

Phil. Ay—let me see that Rogue deny to fire a House, make a Riot, or any other little thing, when there were no other way to come at me.

Tom. I'm oblig'd to you, Madam.

Phil. Why don't we hear every Day of People's hanging themselves for Love,—and won't they venture the Hazard of being hanged for Love?—Oh were I a Man—

Myrt. What manly thing would you have me undertake? according to your Ladyship's Notion of a Man.

Phil. Only be at once, what, one time or other, you may be, and wish to be, or must be.

Myrt. Dear Girl, talk plainly to me, and consider, I in my Condition, can't be in very good Humour—you say, to be at once what I must be.

Phil. Ay, ay,—I mean no more than to be an old Man; I saw you do it very well at the Masquerade: In a Word old Sir *Geoffrey Cimberton* is every Hour expected in town to join in the Deeds and Settlements for marrying Mr. *Cimberton*—He is half blind, half lame, half dead, half dumb; tho', as to his Passions and Desires, he is as warm and ridiculous as when in the Heat of Youth—

Tom. Come to the Business, and don't keep the Gentleman in Suspence for the Pleasure of being Courtied as you serve me.

Phil. I saw you at the Masquerade act such a one to Perfection: go, and put on that very Habit, and come to our House as Sir *Geoffrey*. There is not one there but myself, knows his Person; I was born in the Parish where he is Lord of the Manor. I have seen him often and often at Church in the Country. Do not hesitate, but come thither; they will think you bring a certain Security against Mr. *Myrtle*, and you bring Mr. *Myrtle*; leave the rest to me, I leave this with you, and expect—They don't I told you, know you; they think you out of town which you had as good be for ever, if you lose this Opportunity—I must be gone; I know I am wanted at home.

54 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

Myrt. My dear *Phillis*! [*Catches and kisses her and gives her Money.*]

Phil. O fie! my Kisses are not my own; you have committed Violence; but I'll carry 'em to the right Owner. [*Tom kisses her.*] Come see me down Stairs, [*To Tom*] and leave the Lover to think of his last Game for the Prize. [*Exeunt Tom and Phillis.*]

Myrt. I think I will instantly attempt this wild Expedient—The Extravagance of it will make me less suspected, and it will give me Opportunity to assert my own Right to *Lucinda*, without whom I cannot live: But I am so mortify'd at this Conduct of mine, towards poor *Bevil*; He must think meanly of me—I know not how to re-assume myself, and be in Spirit enough for such an Adventure as this—Yet I must attempt it, if it be only to be near *Lucinda*, under her present Perplexities; and sure.

The next Delight to Transport with the Fair,
Is to relieve her in her Hours of Care. [*Exit.*]

ACT V. SCENE I:

SCENE F, *Sealand's House.*

Enter Phillis, with Lights, before Myrtle, disguis'd like old Sir Geoffrey, supported by Mrs. Sealand, Lucinda and Cimberton.

Mrs. Seal. **N**OW I have seen you thus far, *Sir Geoffrey*, will you excuse me a Moment, while I give my necessary Orders for your Accommodation? [*Exit Mrs. Seal.*]

Myrt. I have not seen you, Cousin *Cimberton*, since you were ten Years old; and as it is incumbent on you, to keep up our Name and Family, I shall upon very reasonable Terms join with you, in a Settlement to that Purpose. Though I must tell you, Cousin, this is the first Merchant that has married into our House.

Luc. Deuce on 'em! am I a Merchant, because my Father is? [*Aside.*]

Myrt. But is he directly a Trader at this Time?

Cimb. There's no hiding the Disgrace, Sir? he trades to all Parts of the World.

Myrt.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 55

Myrt. We never had one of our Family before, who descended from Persons that did any thing.

Cimb. Sir, since it is a Girl that they have, I am for the Honour of my Family, willing to take it in again; and to sink her into our Name, and no harm done.

Myrt. 'Tis prudently and generously resolved—Is this the young thing?

Cimb. Yes, Sir.

Phil. Good Madam, don't be out of Humour, but let 'em run to the utmost of their Extravagance—Hear 'em out.

Myrt. Can't I see her nearer, my Eyes are but weak.

Phil. Beside, I am sure the Uncle has something worth your Notice. I'll take Care to get off the young one, and leave you to observe what may be wrought out of the old one for your Good. [Exit.]

Cimb. Madam, this old Gentleman, your great Uncle, desires to be introduced to you, and to see you nearer!

——Approach, Sir.

Myrt. By your Leave, young Lady—[Puts on Spectacles]
—Cousin *Cimberton*! She has exactly that Sort of Neck, and Bosom, for which my Sister *Gertrude* was so much admir'd, in the Year sixty one, before the *French* Dresses first discover'd any thing in Woman below the Chin.

Luc. [Aside] What a very odd Situation am I in? Tho' I cannot but be diverted, at the Extravagance of their Humours, equally unsuitable to their Age—Chin, quotha—I don't believe my passionate Lover there knows whether I have one or not. Ha! ha!

Myrt. Madam, I would not willingly offend, but I have a better Glass ——— [Pulls out a large one.]

Enter Phillis to Cimberton.

Phil. Sir, my Lady desires to shew the Apartment to you that she intends for Sir *Geoffrey*.

Cimb. Well Sir, by that Time you have sufficiently gaz'd, and sunned yourself in the Beauties of my Spouse there, I will wait on you again [Exit Cimberton and Phillis.]

Myrt. Were it not, Madam, that I might be troublesome, there is something of Importance, tho' we are alone, which I would say more safe from being heard.

Luc. There is something in this old Fellow methinks, that raises my Curiosity.

Myrt

Myrt. To be free, Madam, I as heartily condemn this Kinsman of mine, as you *do*, and am sorry to see so much Beauty and Merit devoted, by your Parents, to so insensible a Possessor.

Luc. Surprising!—I hope then, Sir, you will not contribute to the wrong you are so generous as to pity, whatever may be the Interest of your Family.

Myrt. This Hand of mine shall never be employed, to sign any thing against your Good and Happiness.

Luc. I am sorry, Sir, it is not in my Power to make you proper Acknowledgements; but there is a Gentleman in the World, whose Gratitude will, I am sure, be worthy of the Favour.

Myrt. All the Thanks I desire, Madam, are in your Power to give.

Luc. Name them, and command them.

Myrt. Only Madam, that the first Time you are alone with your Lover, you will with open Arms receive him.

Luc. As willingly as his Heart could wish it.

Myrt. Thus then he claims your Promise? O *Lucinda*!

Luc. O! a Cheat! a Cheat! a Cheat!

Myrt. Hush! 'tis I, 'tis I, your Lover, *Myrtle*, himself, Madam.

Luc. O bless me! what a Rashness and Folly to surprise me so——But hush——my Mother——

Enter Mrs. Sealand, Cimberton, and Phillis.

Mrs. Seal. How now! what's the Matter?

Luc. O Madam! as soon as you left the Room, my Uncle fell into a sudden Fit, and—and—so I cry'd out for Help to support him and conduct him to his Chamber.

Mrs. Seal. That was kindly done! Alas! Sir, how do you find yourself?

Myrt. Never was taken in so odd a Way in my Life—pray lead me! O! I was talking here—*(pray carry me)* to my Cousin *Cimberton's* young Lady——

Mrs. Seal. [*Aside*] My Cousin *Cimberton's* young Lady! How zealous he is, even in his Extremity for the Match, a right *Cimberton*. [*Cimb. and Luc. lead him, as one in Pain, &c.*]

Cimb. Pox; Uncle, you will pull my Ear off.

Luc. Pray Uncle! you will squeeze me to Death.

Mrs. Seal. No matter, No matter——he knows not what he does. Come, Sir, shall I help you out?

Myrt.

Myrt. By no Means; I'll trouble nobody but my young Cousins here.

[*They lead him off.*]

Phil. But pray Madam, does your Ladyship intend that Mr. *Cimberton* really shall marry my young Mistress at last? I don't think he likes her.

Mrs. Seal. That's not material! Men of his Speculation are above Desires—but be it as it may; now I have given old Sir *Geoffrey* the Trouble of coming up to sign and seal, with what Countenance can I be off.

Phil. As well as with twenty others, Madam; It is the Glory and Honour of a great Fortune, to live in continual treaties, and still to break off: it looks great Madam.

Mrs. Seal. True, *Phillis*—yet to return our Blood again into the *Cimbertons*, is an Honour not to be rejected—but were not you saying, that Sir *John Bevil's* Creature *Humphrey*, has been with Mr. *Sealand*?

Phil. Yes, Madam; I overheard them agree, that Mr. *Sealand* should go himself, and visit this unknown Lady that Mr. *Bevil* is so great with; and if he found nothing there to fright him, that Mr. *Bevil* should still marry my young Mistress.

Mrs. Seal. How! nay then he shall find she is my Daughter, as well as his: I'll follow him this Instant, and take the whole Family along with me: The disputed Power of disposing of my own Daughter shall be at an end this very Night—I'll live no longer in Anxiety for a little Hussy that hurts my Appearance, whenever I carry her: and for whose sake, I seem to be not at all regarded, and that in the best of my Days.

Phil. Indeed Madam, if she were married, your Ladyship might very well be taken for Mr. *Sealand's* Daughter.

Mrs. Seal. Nay, when the Chit has, not been with me, I have heard the Men say as much—I'll no longer cut off the greatest Pleasure of a Woman's Life (the shining in Assemblies) by her forward Anticipation of the Respect that's due to her superior—she shall down to *Cimberton* Hall—she shall—she shall. &

Phil. I hope, Madam, I shall stay with your Ladyship.

Mrs. Seal. Thou shalt, *Phillis*, and I'll place thee then more about me—But order Chairs immediately—I'll be gone this Minute.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE *Charing-Cross.**Enter Mr. Seal and Humphrey.*

Mr. Seal. I am very glad, *Mr. Humphrey*, that you agree with me, that it is for our common Good, I should look thoroughly into this Matter.

Humph. I am indeed, of that Opinion; for there is no Artifice, nothing conceal'd, in our Family, which ought in Justice to be known; I need not desire you, Sir, to treat the Lady with Care and Respect.

Mr. Seal. Master *Humphrey*—I shall not be rude, tho' I design to be a little abrupt, and come into the Matter at once to see how she will bear, upon a Surprise.

Humph. That's the Door, Sir, I wish you Success—
[*While Humphrey speaks Seal and consults his Table-Book.*]
I am less concern'd what happens there, because I hear *Mr. Myrtle* is well lodg'd, as old *Sir Geoffrey*, so I am willing to let this Gentleman employ himself here, to give them time at home: for I'm sure 'tis necessary for the quiet of our family, *Lucinda* were dispos'd of, out of it, since *Mr Bewil's* Inclination is so much otherwise engag'd. [Exit.]

Mr. Seal. I think this is the Door—[*Knocks*] I'll carry this Matter with an Air of Authority, to enquire, tho' I make an Errand, to begin Discourse. [*Knocks again, and enter a Foot Boy*] So young Man! is your Lady within?

Boy. Alack, Sir! I am but a Country Boy—I dan't know, whether she is, or noa: but an you'll stay a bit, I'll goa, and ask the Gentlewoman thats with her.

Mr. Seal. Why, Sirrah, tho' you are a Country Boy, you can see, can't you? you know whether she is at home, when you see her, don't you?

Boy. Nay, nay, I'm not such a Country Lad neither, Master, to think she's at home, because I see her: I have been in Town but a Month, and lost one Place already, for believing my own Eyes.

Mr. Seal. Why, Sirrah! have you learn'd to lie already?

Boy. Ah, Master! things that are Lies in the Country, are not Lies at *London*—I begin to know my Business a little better than so—but an you'll please to walk in, I'll call a Gentlewoman to you that will tell you for certain—she can make bold to ask my Lady herself.

Mr. Seal. O! then, she is within, I find, tho' you dare not say so.

Boy. Nay, nay! that's neither here nor there: what's matter

matter whether she is within or no, if she has not a mind to see any Body.

Mr. *Seal*. I can't tell, Sirrah, whether you are arch or simple, but however get me a direct answer, and here's a Shilling for you.

Boy. Will you please to walk in, I'll see what I can do for you.

Mr. *Seal*. I see you will be fit for your Business in time Child. But I expect to meet with nothing but Extraordinaries, in such a House. [in.

Boy. Such a house! Sir, you han't seen it yet: Pray walk

Mr. *Seal*. Sir I'll wait upon you. [Exit.

SCENE, *Indiana's House.*

Enter *Isabella*.

Isab. What Anxiety do I feel for this poor Creature: What will be the End of her? Such a languishing unreserved Passion, for a Man that at last must certainly leave, or ruin her! and perhaps both! then the Aggravation of the Distress is, that she does not believe he will—not but, I must own, if they are both what they would seem, they are made for one another, as much as *Adam* and *Eve* were, for there is no other of their kind, but themselves.

Enter Boy.

So *Daniel*! what News with you?

Boy. Madam, there's a Gentleman below would speak with my Lady.

Isab. Sirrah! don't you know Mr. *Bewil* yet!

Boy. Madam, 'tis not the Gentleman who comes every Day, and asks for you, and won't go in till he knows whether you are with her or no.

Isab. Ha! that's a particular I did not know before; Well! be it who it will, let him come up to me.

[Exit Boy; and re-enters with Mr. *Sealand*.

Isabella looks amazed.

Mr. *Seal*. Madam, I can't blame your being a little surprized to see a perfect Stranger make a Visit and—

Isab. I am indeed surpriz'd! I see he does not know me.

Mr. *Seal*. You are very prettily lodged here, Madam; in troth you seem to have every thing in Plenty—a thousand a year, I warrant you, upon this pretty nest of Rooms, and the dainty one with them.

[Aside and looking about.

Isab.

Ifab. (Apart) Twenty Years, it seems, have less Effect in the Alteration of a Man of thirty, than of a Girl of Fourteen—he's almost still the same; but alas! I find by other Men, as well as himself, I am not what I was——As soon as he spoke I was convinc'd 'twas he—How shall I contain my Surprise and Satisfaction! he must not know me yet.

Mr. Seal. Madam, I hope I don't give you any Disturbance; But there is a young Lady here, with whom I have a particular Business to discourse, and I hope she will admit me to that Favour.

Ifab. Why, Sir, have you any Notice concerning her? I wonder who could give it you.

Mr. Seal. That, Madam, is fit only to be communicated to herself.

Ifab. Well, Sir! you shall see her: I find he knows nothing yet, nor shall from me; I am resolv'd, I will observe this Interlude, this Sport of Nature, and Fortune——You shall see her presently, Sir; For now I am as a Mother and will trust her with you. *[Exit.]*

Mr. Seal. As a Mother! right: that's the old Phrase, for one of those Commode Ladies, who lend out Beauty for Hire, to young Gentlemen that have pressing Occasions. But here comes the precious Lady herself. In troth a very finely Woman——

Ind. I am told, Sir, you have some Affair that requires your speaking with me.

Mr. Seal. Yes, Madam: there came to my Hands a Bill drawn by *Mr. Bewil*, which is payable to-morrow; and he in the Intercourse of Business, sent it to me, who have Cash of his, and desired me to send a Servant with it; but I have made bold to bring you the Money myself.

Ind. Sir, was that necessary?

Mr. Seal. No Madam; but, to be free with you, the Fame of your Beauty, and the Regard which *Mr. Bewil* is a little too well known to have for you, excited my Curiosity.

Ind. Too well known to have for me! your sober Appearance, Sir, which my Friend describ'd, made me expect no Rudeness, or Absurdity at least—Who's there? Sir, if you pay the Money to a Servant, 'twill be as well.

Mr. Seal. Pray, Madam; be not offended; I came hither on an innocent, nay, a virtuous Design; and, if
you

you will have Patience to hear me, it may be as useful to you as you are in a friendship with Mr. *Bevil*, as to my only Daughter whom I was this Day disposing of.

Ind. You make me hope, Sir, I have mistaken you; I am compos'd again; be free, say on—what I am afraid to hear—— [Aside.]

Mr. Seal. I fear'd, indeed, an unwarranted Passion here, but I did not think it was in Abuse of so worthy an Object, so accomplish'd a Lady, as your Sense and Mein bespeak—but the Youth of our Age care not what Merit and Virtue they bring to Shame, so they gratify—

Ind. Sir—you are going into very great Errors—but as you are pleas'd to say, you see something in me that has chang'd at least, the Colour of your Suspicions; so has your Appearance alter'd mine, and made me earnestly attentive to what has any Way concern'd you, to enquire into my Affairs and Character.

Mr. Seal. How sensibly! with what an Air she talks!

Ind. Good Sir, be seated—and tell me tenderly—keep all your Suspicions concerning me alive, that you may in a proper and prepar'd Way—acquaint me why the Care of your Daughter obliges a Person of your seeming Worth and Fortune, to be thus inquisitive about a wretched, helpless, friendless—(weeping.) But I beg your Pardon—tho' I am an Orphan, your Child is not; and your Concern for her, it seems, has brought you hither—I'll be compos'd—pray go on, Sir.

Mr. Seal. How could Mr. *Bevil* be such a Monster, to injure such a Woman!

Ind. No, Sir—you wrong him—he has not injur'd me—my Support is from his Bounty.

Mr. Seal. Bounty! When Gluttons give high Prices for Delicacies, they are prodigious bountiful.

Ind. Still, still you will persist in that Error—But my own Fears tell me all—You are the Gentleman, I suppose for whose happy Daughter he is designed a Husband, by his good Father, and he has, perhaps, consented to the Overture: He was here this Morning, dress'd beyond his usual Plainness, nay most sumptuously—and he is to be, perhaps, this Night a Bridegroom.

Mr. Seal. I own he was intended such: But, Madam, on your Account, I have determin'd to defer my Daughter's

ter's Marriage, till I am satisfy'd from your own Mouth, of what Nature are the Obligations you are under to him.

Ind. His Actions, Sir, his Eyes have only made me think he design'd to make me the Partner of his Heart. The Goodness and Gentleness of his Demeanour made me misinterpret all—'Twas my own Hope, my own Passion, that deluded me—He never once made one amorous Advance to me—His large Heart, and bestowing Hand have only helped the Miserable : Nor know I why, but from his mere Delight in Virtue, that I have been his Care, the Object on which to indulge and please himself, with pouring Favours.

Mr. Seal. Madam, I know not why it is, but I as well as you, am, methinks, afraid of entering into the Matter I came about ; but 'tis the same thing, as if we had talk'd never so distinctly—he never shall have a Daughter of mine.

Ind. If you say this from what you think of me, you wrong yourself and him—Let not me, miserable tho' I may be, do Injury to my Benefactor—No, Sir, my treatment ought rather to reconcile you to his Virtues—If to bestow, without a Prospect of Return ; if to delight in supporting what might, perhaps, be thought an Object of Desire, with no other View than to be her Guard against those who would not be so disinterested ; if these Actions, Sir, can in a careful Parent's Eye commend him to a Daughter, give yours, Sir, give her to my honest, generous *Bevil*—What have I to do, but sigh and weep, to rave, run wild, a Lunatick in Chains, or hid in Darkness, mutter in distracted Starts, and broken Accents, my strange, strange Story !

Mr. Seal. Take Comfort Madam.

Ind. All my Comfort must be to expostulate in Madness, to relieve with Frenzy my Despair, and shrieking to demand of Fate, why—why was I born to such Variety of Sorrows ?

Mr. Seal. If I have been the least Occasion—

Ind. No—'twas Heaven's high Will I should be such—to be plundered in my Cradle ! toss'd on the Seas ! and even there, an Infant Captive ! to lose my Mother, hear but of my Father—to be adopted ! lose my Adopter ! then plung'd again in worse Calamities !

Mr.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 63

Mr. Seal. An Infant Captive!

Ind. Yet then! to find the most Charming of Mankind once more to set me free, (from what I thought the last Distress) to load me with his Services, his Bounties, and his Favours; to support my very Life, in a Way that stole, at the same time, my very Soul itself from me.

Mr. Seal. And has young *Bevil* been this worthy Man?

Ind. Yet then again this very Man to take another! without leaving me the Right, the Pretence of easing my fond Heart with Tears! For oh; I can't reproach him, though the same Hand that rais'd me to this Height, now throws me down the Precipice.

Mr. Seal. Dear Lady! O yet one Moment's Patience: my Heart grows full with your Affliction: But yet there's something in your Story that—

Ind. My Portion here is Bitterness and Sorrow.

Mr. Seal. Do not think so: Pray answer me: Does *Bevil* know your Name and Family?

Ind. Alas! too well! Oh, could I be any other thing than what I am—I'll tear away all Traces of my former Self, my little Ornaments, the Remains of my first State, the Hints of what I ought to have been.

[In her Disorder she throws away a Bracelet, which Sealand takes up and looks earnestly on it.]

Mr. Seal. Ha! what's this? my Eyes are not deceiv'd It is, it is the same; the very Bracelet which I bequeath'd my Wife, at our last mournful Parting.

Ind. What said you, Sir! your Wife! Whither does my Fancy carry me? What means this unfelt Motion at my Heart? and yet again my Fortune but deludes me; for if I err not, Sir your Name is *Sealand*: But my lost Father's Name was——

Mr. Seal. *Danvers*! was it not?

Ind. What new Amazement! that is indeed my Family.

Mr. Seal. Know then when my Misfortunes drove me to the *Indies*, for Reasons too tedious now to mention, I chang'd my Name of *Danvers* into *Sealand*.

Enter Isabella.

Isab. If there wants an Explanation of your Wonder, examine well this Face (yours, Sir, I well remember) gaze on, and read, in me, your Sister *Isabella*!

Mr. Seal. My Sister!

Isab.

Isab. But here's a Claim more tender yet—your *Indiana*, Sir, your long lost Daughter.

Mr. Seal. O my Child! my Child!

Ind. All gracious Heaven! is it possible! do I embrace my Father?

Mr. Seal. And do I hold thee—These Passions are too strong for Utterance—Rise, rise, my Child, and give my Tears their Way—O my Sister!

(*Embracing her.*)

Isab. Now dearest Niece, my groundless Fears, my painful Cares no more shall vex thee. If I have wrong'd thy noble Lover with too hard Suspicions; my just Concern for thee, I hope, will plead my Pardon.

Mr. Seal. O! make him then the full Amends, and be yourself the Messenger of Joy. Fly this Instant! tell him all these wondrous Turns of Providence in his Favour: Tell him I have now a Daughter to bestow which he no longer will decline: that this day he still shall be a Bridegroom: nor shall a Fortune, the Merit which his Father seeks, be wanting: tell him the Reward of all his Virtues waits on his Acceptance. (*Exit Isab.*)

Indiana my dearest *Indiana*! (*Turns and embraces her.*)

Ind. Have I then at last a Father's Sanction on my Love; His bounteous Hand to give, and make my Heart a Present worthy of *Bevil's* Generosity?

Mr. Seal. O my Child! how are our Sorrows past o'er-paid by such a Meeting! Though I have lost so many Years of soft paternal Dalliance with thee, yet, in one Day, to find thee thus, and thus, bestow thee, in such perfect Happiness! is ample, ample Reparation! and yet again the Merit of thy Lover.

Ind. O! had I Spirits left to tell you of his Actions! how strongly Filial Duty has suppress'd his Love; and how Concealment still has doubled all his Obligations; the Pride, the Joy of his Alliance, Sir, would warm your Heart as he has conquer'd mine.

Mr. Seal. How laudable is Love, when born of Virtue! I burn to embrace him—

Ind. See, Sir, my Aunt already has succeeded, and brought him to your Wishes.

Enter

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 63

Enter Isabella, with *Sir John Bevil*, *Bevil jun.* *Mrs. Sealand*, *Cimberton*, *Myrtle* and *Lucinda*.

Sir J. Bev. (*Entering*) Where! where's this Scene of Wonder—*Mr. Sealand*, I congratulate, on this Occasion, our mutual Happiness—Your good Sister, Sir, has with the story of your Daughter's Fortunes, fill'd us with Surprise and Joy; Now all Exceptions are remov'd: my Son has now avow'd his Love, and turn'd all former Jealousies and Doubts to Approbation, and, I am told, your Goodness has consented to reward him.

Mr. Seal. If, Sir, a Fortune equal to his Father's Hopes can make this Object worthy of his Acceptance.

Bev. jun. I hear your Mention, Sir, of Fortune, with Pleasure only, as it may prove the means to reconcile the best of Fathers to my Love—Let him be provident, but let me be happy—My ever destin'd, my acknowledg'd Wife.

(*Embracing Indiana.*)

Ind. Wife! O my ever-loved! my Lord! my Master!

Sir J. Bev. I congratulate myself, as well as you, that I had a Son, who could, under such Disadvantages, discover your great Merit.

Mr. Seal. O! *Sir John*! how vain, how weak is human Prudence? What Care, what Foresight, what Imagination could contrive such blest Events to make our Children happy, as Providence in one short Hour has laid before us.

Cimb. (*to Mrs. Sealand*) I am afraid, Madam, *Mr. Sealand* is a little too busy for our Affair, if you please we'll take another Opportunity.

Mrs. Seal. Let us have Patience, Sir.

Cimb. But we make *Sir Geoffery* wait, Madam.

Myrt. O Sir! I am not in haste.

Mr. Seal. But here! here's our general Benefactor! Excellent young Man, that could be, at once, a Lover to her Beauty, and a Parent to her Virtue.

Bev. jun. If you think that an Obligation, Sir, give me leave to over-pay myself, in the only Instance, that can now add to my Felicity, by begging you to bestow this Lady on *Mr. Myrtle*.

Mr. Seal. She is his without reserve, (I beg he may be sent for)—*Mr. Cimberton*, notwithstanding you never had

60 THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

my Consent, yet there is, since I last saw you, another Objection to your Marriage with my Daughter.

Cimb. I hope, Sir, your Lady has conceal'd nothing from me?

Mr. Seal. Troth, Sir! nothing but what was conceal'd from myself; another Daughter, who has an undoubted Title to half my Estate.

Cimb. How! *Mr. Sealand!* why then if half *Mrs. Lucinda's* Fortune is gone, you can't say, that any of my Estate is settled upon her: I was in Treaty for the whole; but if that is not to be come at, to be sure, there can be no Bargain.—Sir.—I have nothing to do but to take my Leave of your good Lady, my Cousin, and beg Pardon for the Trouble I have given this old Gentleman.

Myrt. That you have, *Mr. Cimberton*, with all my Heart.

[*Discovers himself.*]

Om. *Mr. Myrtle!*

Myrt. And I beg Pardon of the whole Company, that I assumed the Person of *Sir Geoffrey*, only to be present at the Danger of this Lady's being dispos'd of, and in her utmost Exigence to assert my Right to her: Which if her Parents will ratify, as they once favour'd my Pretensions, no Abatement of Fortune, shall lessen her Value to me.

Luc. Generous Man!

Mr. Seal. If, Sir, you can overlook the Injury of being in Treaty with one, who as meanly left her as you have generously asserted your Right in her, she is yours.

Luc. *Mr. Myrtle*, though you have ever had my Heart yet now I find I love you more, because I bring you less.

Myrt. We have much more than we want, and I am glad any Event has contributed to the Discovery of our real Inclinations to each other.

Mrs. Seal. Well! however I'm glad the Girl's dispos'd of any way.

[*Aside.*]

Beviljun. *Myrtle!* No longer Rivals now, but Brothers.

Myrt. Dear *Bevil!* you are born to triumph over me! but now our Competition ceases: I rejoice in the Pre-eminence of your Virtue, and your Alliance adds Charms to *Lucinda*.

Sir,

The CONSCIOUS LOVERS. 67

Sir J. Bev. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, you have
set the World a fair Example: Your Happiness is ow-
ing to your Constancy and Merit: And the several Dif-
ficulties you have struggled with, evidently shew,

Whate'er the generous Mind itself denies,
The secret Care of Providence supplies.

[Exeunt.]

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

By Mr. *WELSTED*.

Intended to be spoken by *Indiana*.

OUR Author, who Intreaties cannot move,
Spight of the dear Coquetry that you love,
Swears he'll not frustrate (so he plainly means)
By a loose Epilogue, his decent Scenes.
Is it not, Sirs, hard Fate I meet To-day,
To keep me rigid still beyond the Play?
And yet I'm sav'd a World of Pains that way.
I now can look, I now can move at Ease,
Nor need I torture these poor Limbs to please;
Nor with the Hand or Foot attempt Surprise,
Nor wrest my Features, nor Fatigue my Eyes:
Bless me! what freakish Gambols have I play'd!
What Motions try'd, and wanton Looks betray'd!
Out of pure Kindness all! to over-rule
The threaten'd Hiss, and screen some scribbling Fool.
With more Respect I'm entertain'd To-night:
Our Author thinks, I can with Ease delight.
My artless Looks while modest Graces arm,
He says, I need but to appear; and charm.
A Wife so form'd, by these Examples, bred,
Pours Joy and Gladness round the Marriage Bed:
Soft Source of Comfort, kind Relief from Care,
And 'tis her least Perfection to be fair.
The Nymph with Indiana's Worth who vies,
A Nation will behold with Bevil's Eyes.

F I N I S.

